



Richard pinx.

THE
MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS

Of the late REVEREND and LEARNED
CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

Principal Librarian of the University of *Cambridge*.

Containing all his

WRITINGS,

Except the LIFE of CICERO.

Many of which were never before PUBLISHED.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

With a complete INDEX to the whole.

L O N D O N,

Printed for RICHARD MANBY on *Ludgate-hill*,
and H. S. COX in *Pater-noster Row*.

M.DCC.LII.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE Reputation of *Dr. Middleton's Writings* is so well established in the World, that nothing needs be said in favour of the present Collection of them into one Body, especially as many of them were scarce possible to be procur'd. It were to be wished, that he had pursued and completed the Design, which he had formed, of composing an exact History of his Works, with the Occasions and Circumstances of them: In defect of which we can only subjoin a Catalogue of them in the Order, in which they were printed, after having premised a few Particulars concerning his Life, additional to those pointed out by the Index under his Name.

He was Son of a Clergyman in *Yorkshire*, possessed of an easy Fortune, besides his Preferment in the Church; and was born at *Richmond*, in that County, on the 27th of *December* 1683. At seventeen Years of Age he was sent to *Trinity College* in *Cambridge*, of which he afterwards was Fellow; quitting it upon his Marriage, when he was twenty-seven Years old, with *Mrs. Drake*, Daughter of *Mr. Morris* of *Oak-Morris* in *Kent*, and Widow of Counsellor *Drake* of *Cambridge*, a Lady of ample Fortune. After his Marriage he took a Living in the Gift of his Wife, but resign'd it in about a Year.

His chief Residence for the rest of his Life was at *Cambridge*, of which University he was chosen principal Library-Keeper, and held that Place till his Death. After the Decease of his first Wife he travelled thro' *France* into *Italy*, and was at *Rome* in 1724. In *December* 1731 he
was

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was appointed Woodwardian Professor; which Post he surrender'd in 1734, and soon after married *Mary*, Daughter of the Rev^d Mr. *Conyers Place* of *Dorchester*; and upon her Death his third Wife, *Anne*, the Daughter of *John Powell*, Esq; of *Boughbroya* in the County of *Radnor*, in *North-Wales*. He accepted a Living from Sir *John Frederick*, Bart. not long before his Death, which was occasioned by a slow hectic Fever, and Disorder in his Liver, on the 28th of *July* 1750, in the 67th Year of his Age, at *Hildersham* in *Cambridgeshire*, an Estate of his own purchasing.

T H E C O N T E N T S Of the First VOLUME.

I. *A Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church from the earliest Ages, through several successive Centuries. To which is prefixed the Introductory Discourse.*

II. *Remarks on two Pamphlets lately publish'd against Dr. Middleton's Introductory Discourse. The one, intituled, Observations on that Discourse in answer to the Author's Prejudices, &c. The other, The Jesuit-Cabal farther opened, or a Defence of Dr. Chapman's late Charge, &c.*

III. *A Vindication of the Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church, &c. from the Objections of Dr. Dodwell and Dr. Church.*

IV. *A Preface to an intended Answer to all the Objections made against the Free Inquiry.*

V. *Oratio de novo Physiologia explicandæ munere ex celeberrimi Woodwardi Testamento instituto: habita Cantabrigiæ in Scholis publicis.*

A CA~

A CATALOGUE of Dr. MIDDLETON'S WORKS, in the
Order in which they were publish'd.

1719.

A Full and impartial Account of all the late Proceedings in the University of Cambridge against Dr. Bentley, 8vo.

A second Part of the Full and impartial Account of all the late Proceedings, &c. 8vo.

Some Remarks upon a Pamphlet, intituled, The Case of Dr. Bentley farther stated and vindicated, wherein the Merit of the Author and his Performance, and the Complaint of Proctor Laughton, are briefly considered, 8vo.

A true Account of the present State of Trinity College in Cambridge, under the oppressive Government of their Master Richard Bentley, late D. D. 8vo.

1721.

Remarks, Paragraph by Paragraph, upon the Proposals lately published by Richard Bentley, for a new Edition of the Greek Testament and Latin Version, London, in 4to.

Some farther Remarks, Paragraph by Paragraph, upon Proposals lately published for a new Edition of a Greek and Latin Testament, by Richard Bentley, containing a full Answer to the Editor's late Defence of his said Proposals, as well as to all his Objections there made against my former Remarks, London, in 4to.

1723.

Bibliothecæ Cantabrigiæ ordinandæ Methodus quædam, quam Domino Procancellario Senatuique Academico considerandam & perficiendam officii & Pietatis ergo proponit. Cambridge, in 4to.

1726.

De Medicorum apud veteres Romanos degentium conditione Dissertatio; quæ contra Viros celeberrimos Jac. Sponium & Rich. Meadium, M. D. D. servilem atque ignobilem eam fuisse ostenditur. Cambridge, 4to.

1727.

Dissertationis de Medicorum Romæ degentium conditione ignobili

A CATALOGUE OF DR. MIDDLETON'S WORKS.

*Et servili, contra anonyms quosdam Notarum brevium, Respon-
sionis, atque Animadversionis Auctores Defensio. Pars prima.
Cambridge, 4to.*

1729.

*A Letter from Rome, shewing an exact Conformity between
Popery and Paganism : or the Religion of the present Romans de-
rived from that of their Heathen Ancestors. London, 4to. pub-
lished in May, 1729. The fourth Edition was published at Lon-
don, 1741, in 8vo. with a prefatory Discourse and Postscript.*

1731.

*A Letter to Dr. Waterland; containing some Remarks on his
Vindication of Scripture; in answer to a Book, intitled, Christi-
anity as old as the Creation. Together with the Sketch or Plan of
another Answer to the said Book. London, 8vo. published in
December 1730.*

*A Defence of the Letter to Dr. Waterland, against the false
and frivolous Cavils of the Author of the Reply. London, 8vo.
published November, 1731.*

1732.

*Some farther Remarks on a Reply to the Defence of the Letter
to Dr. Waterland : Wherein the Author's Sentiments, as to all the
principal Points in Dispute, are fully and clearly explained in the
manner, that has been promised. London, 8vo. publish'd April 1732.*

*Oratio de novo Physiologiæ explicandæ munere ex celeberrimi
Woodwardi Testamento instituto : habita Cantabrigiæ in Scholis
publicis. Cambridge, in 4to. publish'd in July, 1732.*

1733.

*Remarks on some Observations address'd to the Author of the
Letter to Dr. Waterland. By the Author of the Letter. London,
8vo. publish'd in May, 1733.*

1735.

*A Dissertation concerning the Origin of Printing in England :
Shewing,*

A CATALOGUE OF DR. MIDDLETON'S WORKS.

Shewing, that it was first introduced and practised by our Countryman William Caxton, at Westminster, and not, as is commonly believed, by a foreign Printer at Oxford. Cambridge, 4to. publish'd in Feb. 1734-5.

1741.

The History of the Life of M. Tullius Cicero. London, 2 Volumes, 4to.

1743.

The Epistles of M. T. Cicero to M. Brutus, and of Brutus to Cicero: With the Latin Text in the opposite Page, and English Notes to each Epistle: Together with a prefatory Dissertation, in which the Authority of the said Epistles is vindicated, and all the Objections of the Revd. Mr. Tunstall particularly considered and confuted. London, 8vo. publish'd in November, 1742.

1745.

Germana quædam Antiquitatis eruditæ Monumenta, &c. London, 4to.

1747.

A Treatise on the Roman Senate, London, 8vo. publish'd in March 1746-7.

An Introductory Discourse to a larger Work, designed hereafter to be published, concerning the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church from the earliest Ages, through several successive Centuries; tending to shew, that we have no sufficient Reason to believe upon the Authority of the primitive Fathers, that any such Powers were continued to the Church after the Days of the Apostles. With a Postscript, containing some Remarks on an Archidiaconal Charge, delivered last Summer by the Revd. Dr. Chapman to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury. London, 4to. publish'd in April 1747.

1748.

Remarks on two Pamphlets lately publish'd against Dr. Middleton's Introductory Discourse. London, 8vo.

A CATALOGUE OF DR. MIDDLETON'S WORKS.

1749.

A Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church from the earliest Ages, through several successive Centuries. London, 4to. publish'd in December 1748.

1750.

An Examination of the Lord Bishop of London's Discourses concerning the Use and Intent of Prophecy; with some cursory Animadversions on his late Appendix, or Additional Dissertation, containing a farther Inquiry into the Mosaic Account of the Fall. London, 8vo. publish'd in January 1749-50.

POSTHUMOUS.

A Vindication of the Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are suppose'd to have subsisted in the Christian Church, &c. from the Objections of Dr. Dodwell and Dr. Church. London 1751.

These now first publish'd,

A Preface to an intended Answer to all the Objections made against the Free Inquiry.

Some Cursory Reflections on the Dispute or Dissension, which happened at Antioch, between the Apostles Peter and Paul.

Reflections on the Variations, or Inconsistencies, which are found among the four Evangelists in their different Accounts of the same Facts.

An Essay on the Gift of Tongues, tending to explain the proper Notion and Nature of it, as it is described and delivered to us in the Sacred Scriptures. And as it appears also to have been understood by the Learned both of the ancient and modern Times.

Some short Remarks on a Story told by the Ancients, concerning St. John the Evangelist, and Cerinthus the Heretic; and on the use, which is made of it by the Moderns, to enforce the Duty of punishing Heretics.

An Essay on the Allegorical and Literal Interpretation of the Creation and Fall of Man.

De Latinarum Literarum Pronunciatione Dissertatio.

Dr. Middleton's Letters to Mr. Warburton, &c.

A
FREE INQUIRY
INTO THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS,

Which are supposed to have subsisted in the

CHRISTIAN CHURCH,
From the EARLIEST AGES through several suc-
cessive CENTURIES.

By which it is shewn,

That we have no sufficient Reason to believe, upon the Authority
of the PRIMITIVE FATHERS,

That any such Powers were continued to the CHURCH, after the
Days of the APOSTLES.

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drop the pursuit of my scheme, or to reform it, in such a manner, as any new light or better information might happen to direct me.

This was my view, in publishing a separate edition of the *Introductory Discourse*: which, as I easily foresaw, was sure to encounter all the opposition, that prejudice, bigotry, and superstition are ever prepared to give to all free inquiries into opinions, which depend on the prevalence of their power. I was aware, that the very novelty of it would offend, and the matter of it still more: that many would rise up against it, and some of them by writing, others, by noise and clamor, try to raise a popular odium upon it; but my comfort was, that this would excite the candid inquirers also, to take it into their consideration, and to weigh the merit and consequences of it; and it was the judgment of these alone, by which I proposed to determine my future measures and resolution with regard to it.

The event has answered, not only to my expectation, but to my wishes: for notwithstanding all, which has been published against it, from the Press, the Pulpit and the Theological Schools, the general approbation, which it has every where received from those, whose authority I chiefly value, has given me the utmost encouragement to persevere in the prosecution of my argument, as being of the greatest importance to the Protestant religion, and the sole expedient, which can effectually secure it, from being gradually undermined, and finally subverted by the efforts of *Rome*.

But

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But besides the favorable reception, which it has met with both among the Clergy and the Layety, it was an unexpected satisfaction to me, to be informed lately by a friend, that Mr. *Lock* had many years ago declared the same opinion with mine, concerning *the miracles of the Primitive Church*, in a paragraph of his *third Letter on Toleration*; which I had never read or seen, but shall now offer to the reader in his own words; being persuaded, that the authority of so eminent a writer, and so singularly qualified by his talents and studies, to discern the exact relations and consequences of things, will add great weight and confirmation to the cause, which I am here defending.

“ And so I leave you, says Mr. *Lock* to his Antagonist, “ to
 “ dispose of the credit of Ecclesiastical writers, as you shall
 “ think fit, and by your authority, to establish or invalidate
 “ theirs, as you please. But this, I think, is evident, that he,
 “ who will build his faith or reasonings upon miracles de-
 “ livered by Church-Historians, *will find cause to go farther than*
 “ *the Apostles time, or else, not to stop at Constantin's*: since the
 “ writers after that period, whose word we take, as unquesti-
 “ onable in other things, speak of miracles in their time with
 “ no less assurance, than the Fathers before the fourth cen-
 “ tury: and a great part of the miracles of the second and
 “ third centuries stand upon the credit of the writers of the
 “ fourth. So that, that sort of argument, which takes and
 “ rejects the testimony of the ancients at pleasure, as it may
 “ best suit with it, will not have much force with those, who
 “ are not disposed to embrace the hypothesis, without any ar-
 “ guments at all [1].”

[1] See Let. 3d. on Tolerat. c. x. p. 269.

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As to the writers, who have hitherto declared themselves against this opinion, signified here in short by Mr. *Lock*, and explained at large by myself, they have shewn a great eagerness indeed, to distinguish their zeal, but a very little knowledge of the question, which they have undertaken to discuss; urged by the hopes of those honors, which they have seen others acquire, by former attacks upon me; and, like true soldiers of the militant Church, prepared to fight for every establishment, that offers such pay and rewards to its defenders. Who, from a blind deference to authority, think the credibility of a witness sufficient, to evince the certainty of all facts indifferently, whether natural or supernatural, probable or improbable; and knowing no distinction between faith and credulity, take a facility of believing, to be the surest mark of a sound Christian. Their arguments are conformable to their principles: for instead of entering into the merits of the cause, and shewing my opinion to be false or contradictory to any truth subsisting in the world, they think it a full confutation of it, to prove it contrary to the belief of the primitive ages, to the testimony of the ancient Fathers, and to the tradition of the Catholic Church: by the help of which venerable names, they insinuate fears and jealousies, of I know not what consequences, dangerous to Christianity, ruinous to the faith of History, and introductive of an universal Scepticism. Terrors purely imaginary; grounded on error and prejudice; which if suffered to prevail, would produce consequences much more to be dreaded; subversive of all true Religion as well as of every thing else, that is rational and virtuous among men. But after all their invectives, it is a pleasure to find them obliged, in the course of the debate, to confute their own clamors; and to declare at last with me, that, whatever

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be the fate of my argument, or were it allowed even to be true, the credit of the Gospel-miracles could not in any degree be shaken by it [1].

But to speak my mind freely on the subject of consequences. I am not so scrupulous perhaps in my regard to them, as many of my profession are apt to be: my nature is frank and open, and warmly disposed, not onely to seek, but to speak what I take to be true, which disposition has been greatly confirmed by the situation, into which Providence has thrown me. For I was never trained to pace in the trammels of the Church, nor tempted by the sweets of it's preferments, to sacrifice the philosophic freedom of a studious, to the servile restraints of an ambitious life: and from this very circumstance, as often as I reflect upon it, I feel that comfort in my own breast, which no external honors can bestow. I persuade myself, that the life and faculties of man, at the best but short and limited, cannot be employed more rationally or laudably, than in the search of knowledge; and especially of that sort, which relates to our duty, and conduces to our happiness. In these Inquiries therefore, wherever I perceive any glimmering of truth before me; I readily pursue, and endeavour to trace it to it's source; without any reserve or caution of pushing the discovery too far, or opening too great a glare of it to the public. I look upon the discovery of any thing which is true, as a valuable acquisition to society; which cannot possibly hurt, or obstruct the good effect of any other truth whatsoever: for they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily coincide with each other; and like the drops of rain, which fall separately into the

[1] See Remarks on two Pamphlets against the Introd. Dis. p. 8, 9.

river, mix themselves at once with the stream, and strengthen the general current.

The light of truth indeed is sure to expose the vanity of all those popular systems and prejudices, which are to be found in every country; derived originally from error, fraud, or superstition; and craftily imposed upon the many, to serve the interests of a few. Hence it is, that upon the detection of any of these, and especially of the religious kind, we see all that rage of fierce Bigots, hypocritical Zealots, and interested Politicians; and of all whose credit or fortunes in any manner depend on the establishment of error and ignorance among men: and hence, all those horrible massacres and persecutions, of which we frequently read, both in Pagan and Christian Countries, which, under the pretext of serving God, have destroyed so many thousands of his best servants. But truth was never known to be on the persecuting side, or to have had any other effect, than to promote the general good, and to co-operate with Heaven itself, in bringing us still nearer to the perfection of our being, and to the knowledge of that eternal rule of good and ill, which God originally marked out and prescribed to the nature of man. Let the consequences then of truth reach as far as they can; the farther they reach the better; the more errors they will detect, and the more they will dissipate of those clouds and mists, in which the crafty and interested part of mankind art apt to involve and disguise the real nature of things, from the view of their fellow creatures.

The present quæstion, concerning the reality of the miraculous powers of the primitive Church, depends on the joint

credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by those powers, and of the witnesses, who attest them. If either part be infirm, their credit must sink in proportion; and if the facts especially be incredible, must of course fall to the ground: because no force of testimony can alter the nature of things. The credibility of facts lies open to the trial of our reason and senses, but the credibility of witnesses depends on a variety of principles, wholly concealed from us; and tho', in many cases, it may reasonably be presumed, yet in none, can it certainly be known. For it is common with men, out of crafty and selfish views, to dissemble and deceive; or, out of weakness and credulity, to embrace and defend with zeal, what the craft of others had imposed upon them: but plain facts cannot delude us; cannot speak any other language, or give any other information, but what flows from nature and truth. The testimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to our senses, in this wonderful fabric and constitution of worldly things, may properly be called the testimony of God himself; as it carries with it the surest instruction in all cases, and to all nations, which in the ordinary course of his providence he has thought fit to appoint for the guidance of human life.

But before we proceed, to examine the particular facts and testimonies, which antiquity has furnished for the decision of this dispute, our first care should be, to inform ourselves of the proper nature and condition of those miraculous powers, which are the subject of it, as they are represented to us in the history of the Gospel: for till we have learnt from those sacred records, what they really were, for what purposes granted, and in what manner exerted by the Apostles and first possessors of them, we cannot form a proper judgement on

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those evidences, which are brought either to confirm or confute their continuance in the Church, and must dispute consequently at random, as chance or prejudice may prompt us, about things unknown to us.

And this indeed appears to be the case of all these zealous Champions, who have attempted to refute the *Introductory Discourse*. Among whom, I have not observed one, who seems to have spent a thought, in considering the origin and use of those powers, as they are set forth in the New Testament. They appeal indeed to the Texts, in which they were promised by our Lord to his Disciples: where tho' there is not the least hint of any particular time, for which they were to last, yet this they supply from their own imagination, and by the help of a postulatam, which all people will grant, *that they continued as long, as they were necessary to the Church*, they presently extend that necessity to what length they please, or as far as they find it agreeable to the several systems, which they had previously entertained about them.

They urge especially that passage from *St. Mark*, in which our Lord, just ready to ascend into Heaven, and giving his last instructions to his Apostles, *to go and preach to all nations*, immediately adds; *And these signs shall follow them who believe: in my name they shall cast out Devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover* [1].

From these words, one of my Antagonists argues thus:

[1] Mark xvi. 17.

“It will here be observed, that this promise was not made to
 “ the Apostles personally, but to them, that should believe
 “ through their preaching, without any limitation of time for
 “ the continuance of these powers to their days. And when
 “ it is considered how great a part of the Heathen world re-
 “ mained unconverted after their days, it is no unreasonable
 “ supposition, that these powers did not expire with the A-
 “ postles, but were continued to their Successors, in the work
 “ of propagating the Gospel. How long, I say not: and per-
 “ haps there is not light enough in history, to settle this point;
 “ as indeed it nothing concerns us. But the earliest Fathers
 “ unanimously affirm, that these powers subsisted in the Church
 “ in their days; and why they are not to be believed, it is the
 “ Author’s business to shew [1].

Another Advocate of the same cause makes the following
 remark on the same passage. “ Our Saviour, before he left
 “ the world, promises these miraculous powers not onely to
 “ the Apostles, but to private Christians: and the rules and
 “ directions, which St. *Paul* afterwards gave the *Corinthians*,
 “ concerning the exercise of them, plainly shew, that they
 “ must have continued some considerable time in the Church.
 “ And as Christ’s promise is without any limitation of time,
 “ we may reasonably suppose that they lasted as long as the
 “ Church had an immediate occasion for them, such as the
 “ farther conversion of the world.”—For which purpose of
 converting those nations, who had not as yet heard of the Gos-
 pel, he declares it, “ to be necessary, that the Successors of the
 “ Apostles should be indued with miraculous powers, especially

[1] See Observat. on the Introd. Disc. p. 25.

“ with *the gift of tongues*, without which they could not expect,
 “ any considerable success—and he concludes therefore, “ that
 “ it is highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that they
 “ did actually subsist in the Church for some considerable
 “ time, after the days of the Apostles [1].”

It being agreed then, that in the original promise of these miraculous gifts, there is no intimation of any particular period, to which their continuance was limited, the next question is, by what sort of evidence the precise time of their duration is to be determined? But to this point one of the writers just referred to, excuses himself, as we have seen, from giving any answer; and thinks it sufficient to declare in general, that *the earliest Fathers unanimously affirm them to have continued down to their times*. Yet he has not told us, as he ought to have done, to what age he limits the character of *the earliest Fathers*; whether to the second or to the third century, or, with the generality of our writers, means also to include the 4th. But to whatever age he may restrain it, the difficulty at last will be, to assign a reason, why we must needs stop there. In the mean while, by his appealing thus to the *earliest Fathers* onely, as unanimous on this article, a common reader would be apt to infer, that the later Fathers are more cold or diffident, or divided upon it; whereas the reverse of this is true, and the more we descend from those earliest Fathers, the more strong and explicit we find their Successors, in attesting the perpetual succession and daily exertion of the same miraculous powers, in their several ages: so that if the cause must be determined by *the unanimous consent of Fathers*, we shall find as much reason to

[1] See Postscript of a Treatise on Mirac. by Abr. Lemoine. p. 511, 512, 515.

believe, that those powers were continued even to the latest ages, as to any other, how early and primitive soever, after the days of the Apostles.

But the same writer gives us two reasons, why he does not chuse to say any thing upon the subject of their duration: 1st, because, *there is not light enough in history, to settle it*: 2dly, because, *the thing itself is of no concern to us*.

As to his first reason, I am at a loss to conceive, what farther light a professed Advocate of the primitive ages and Fathers can possibly require in this case. For as far as the Church-Historians can illustrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a single point in all history, so constantly, explicitly and unanimously affirmed by them all, as the continual succession of these powers through all ages, from the earliest Father, who first mentions them, down to the time of the Reformation. Which same succession is still farther deduced, by persons of the most eminent character, for their probity, learning, and dignity in the *Romish* Church, to this very day. So that the onely doubt, which can remain with us, is; whether the Church-Historians are to be trusted or not: for if any credit be due to them in the present case, it must reach either to all, or to none: because the reason of believing them in any one age, will be found to be of equal force in all, as far as it depends on the characters of the persons attesting, or the nature of the things attested.

The second reason is still more curious; *that the point of their duration is of no concern to us*. This indeed is strange, from a writer of his principles; for if primitive antiquity, as all these champions

champions contend, is to be the rule, of regulating the doctrines and discipline of all modern Churches, it must surely be of the utmost concern to us to know, how far it's authority may be trusted, and how far the hand of God continued to co-operate visibly with the saints of those ages, by giving a divine sanction to the doctrines, which they taught, and the rites, which they established. For that God did actually exert himself in such an extraordinary manner, in those primitive days, this writer affirms from the unanimous testimony of *the earliest Fathers*; yet owns withal, that the same ages were imposed upon also by false and fictitious pretensions to miraculous powers. As far therefore, as it is our duty, to conform ourselves to the doctrines and usages of those early ages, so far it must be of great importance, to have a rule of distinguishing the true from the false; of discerning those, which God had stamped with his authority for the common good of mankind, from those, which fraud and craft had imposed, for the private interest of a few Impostors: towards which, nothing could afford more light and help to us, than to know the precise duration of true miracles, and to be able to pronounce, that they proceeded thus far and no farther. On my part indeed, it might very consistently be said, that it is of no use to inquire or dispute how long those powers subsisted, since, according to my principles, they never subsisted at all, after the days of the Apostles: but when a writer affirms the Primitive Church to be a guide to us, and to have been indued with miraculous powers, for the confirmation of it's divine authority, yet declares it of *no concern to us*, to know, how long those powers continued in it, or at what time God was pleased to withdraw them, on account of the prevailing corruptions and forgeries of the same Church, he acts not onely in contradiction to his own principles,

ples, but to reason and common sense, and betrays a great want either of judgement or sincerity.

The argument also, which these writers alledge for the continuance of miracles, and especially *of the gift of tongues, from the unconverted state of the Heathen world*; is not less impertinent and injudicious: because it might have been alledged as justly and with equal force, through all ages of the Church, from the Apostolic times down to our own; and will justify the Romanists themselves in their pretensions to the same powers at this very day: since the greatest part of this habitable Globe remains still in the same *unconverted state*; immersed in gross idolatry; without any knowledge of the true God, or light of the Gospel among them.

But in truth, this same consideration, *of the unconverted state of the Heathens*, was thought to have so much weight in it by *Grotius*, as to persuade him from a parity, both of reason, and of evidence also, which was found in every age, that these extraordinary gifts were certainly continued to the later, as well as to the earlier times of the Church. Nay, he took the conversion of the Heathens, to be an occasion so worthy of the divine interposition, as not to doubt, he says, but, *that if any person were employed in it at this day, in a manner agreeable to the will of our Lord, he would find himself indued with a power of working miracles* [1]. From which declaration, of so learned and judicious a Critic, we may observe in the first place, what I

[1] Cum vero multo etiam feriora secula plena sint testimoniis ejus rei, nescio qua ratione moti quidam id donum ad prima tantum tempora restringant. — Quare si-

quis nunc etiam Gentibus Christi ignaris—Christum, ita ut ipse annunciari voluit, annunciet, promissionis vim duraturam non dabito. In Mirac. xvi. 17.

have elsewhere frequently signified; how naturally the allowance of those powers to the earlier ages, will engage us, if we are consistent with ourselves, to allow the same also to the later ages: and, in the second place, how fallacious the judgement even of the wisest will ever be found, when deserting the path of nature and experience, and giving the reins to fancy and conjecture, they attempt to illustrate the secret counsils of Providence.

For experience has long taught us, that tho' all the different Churches and Sects of Christians, have sent abroad their several Missionaries, to propagate the Gospel among the remote and Idolatrous nations, yet none of them have ever been enabled to work a single miracle in confirmation of their mission. The Romanists indeed make a pretension to such a power, and boast of several miracles performed by their Missionaries in both the *Indies*: yet, as I have elsewhere observed, one of their gravest writers has openly acknowledged the vanity of such Pretensions; and one of their most eminent wonder-workers St. *Francis Xavier*, called the *Apostle of the Indies*, laments in some of his letters, “ that through his ignorance of the language of those nations, he found himself incapable of doing any service to the Christian cause, and was but little better than a mute Statue among them, till he could acquire some competent knowledge of it: for which purpose, he was forced to act the boy again, and apply himself to the task of learning the rudiments of it [1].”

Now this *gift of tongues* is what the adversaries of my scheme lay the greatest stress upon. They declare it to be so peculiarly

[1] See Præfat. Disc. to my Letter from *Rome*, p. 99.

necessary to the propagation of the Gospel, that no considerable success could be expected without it; and from this necessity infer the certainty of its continuance after the days of the Apostles. But they will have the mortification to find, in the sequel of this work, their imaginary hypothesis effectually confuted by the evidence of real fact; and this very gift, of whose continuance they are so assured, to have been of all others, the most evidently and confessedly withdrawn, in the earliest ages of the Church. They will find, I say, that the single Father, who lays any claim to it, and one of the gravest and most venerable of them all, laments, like the *Romish Apostle of the Indies*, *his own want of it, in the work of propagating the Gospel among a rude and barbarous people*: and that, in all the succeeding ages, while all the other kinds of miraculous gifts are frequently celebrated, and affirmed to flourish still in great abundance, there is not a single instance to be met with of this, nor the least pretension made to it by any writer whatsoever.

From this fact, and many more of the same sort, which might be produced, the reader will observe, how rash and presumptuous it is, to form arguments so peremptorily upon the supposed necessity or propriety of a divine interposition, in this or that particular case; and to decide upon the views and motives of the Deity, by the narrow conceptions of human reason. Whereas the whole, which the wit of man can possibly discover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, must be acquired by a contrary method; not by imagining vainly within ourselves, what may be proper or improper for him to do; but by looking abroad, and contemplating, what he has actually

done; and attending seriously to that revelation, which he made of himself from the beginning, and placed continually before our eyes, in the wonderfull works, and beautifull fabric of this vifible world.

There is another mistake, which is common to all these advocates of the primitive miracles, and the chief source of their prejudices against the *Introductory Discourse*; in taking it for granted, as they all do, that these miraculous powers, when they had once been conferred by our Lord, upon any of his Disciples, were ever after perpetually inherent in them, and ready to be exerted at their will and pleasure: whereas it is evident, from several instances, both of the collation and exercise of them, which we find in the New Testament, that they were merely temporary and occasional; adapted to particular exigencies, thought worthy of them by our Lord; and imparted onely at the moment of their exertion, which, by some special impulse, was notified at the same time to the agent; and as soon as those particular occasions were served, that they were withdrawn again or suspended, and the Agents reduced to the condition of all other men, and left to the guidance of their own natural prudence.

This, I say, is evident, from the account of these gifts and the effects of them, which is given to us in the Gospel; as it has been observed also and declared by some of the best Expofitors. Thus *Grotius*, in his comment on our Lord's promise of them to all true believers, remarks; *that these wonderfull faculties were severally distributed to each faithful Disciple, yet not so, as to be exerted of themselves, or at pleasure, but reserved to special occasions.*

sions [1]. And the same thing is signified by our Lord himself, in his first promise of them to his Apostles, when he sent them out, *two by two, to preach his Gospel to the Jews*: on which occasion he tells them, *that when they were brought before Governors and Kings, they should not take any thought, about what they were to say for themselves, for it would be given to them, in that very hour, what they should speak* [2]. And that it was not peculiar to the gift of language or tongues only, to be given at the moment of it's exertion, but common likewise to all the rest, will be shewn probably, on some other occasion, more at large in a particular treatise, which is already prepared by me, on that subject.

As this then was the state of those extraordinary powers, with which our Lord thought fit, to arm his Apostles, against the first struggles and difficulties of their mission; so in his more intimate conversations with them, we find him frequently inculcating as an essential qualification also for the same mission, the practice of all those moral virtues, which are peculiarly adapted to conciliate the favor and good will of men: a general benevolence, modesty, affability, gentleness of behaviour, with great circumspection and caution of giving offence. *Behold*, says he, *I send ye forth as sheep, in the midst of wolves: be ye wise therefore as serpents, and harmless as doves* [3]: as if he meant to admonish them, that they were not to be perpetually directed by divine impulses and inspirations, but left on many occasions to the ordinary direction of their own natural faculties: and

[1] Non omnibus omnia—ita tamen caret. In Mar. xvi. 17.
cuilibet, ut oportet, credenti aliqua tunc
data sit admirabilis facultas, quæ se non
semper quidem, sed data occasione expli-

[2] Mar. x. 19.

[3] Mat. x. 16.

that their success would depend as much on the purity of their lives, as the force of their wonderful works: and that the miraculous gifts, which were indulged to them, in this infancy of the Gospel, were intended to draw people's attention more strongly to the contemplation of their manners; and to make them reflect on the excellency of that doctrine, which produced such rare fruits, and offered such examples of innocence and sanctity, for the correction of a depraved and sinful world.

The writers however, of whom I am speaking, prepossessed with the notion of the perpetual inherence of those powers, in all, who had once been indued with them, harangue with great gayety on the folly, which they impute to me, of imagining, that they should all be extinguished in a moment, upon the death of the last of the Apostles. They observe, that St. *John* outlived all the rest near forty years; and that some of the most eminent and gifted of the other Disciples, who are mentioned in the Gospel, survived him also, and were employing themselves, in different parts of the earth, in propagating the Gospel, and working perpetual miracles for the conversion of Unbelievers; and it was incredible, that these powers, which they were exerting every hour, with such success and honor to the Christian cause, in all the principal Cities and countries of the world, and at so wide a distance from each other, should all fail them at once, and expire at that very instant, in which St. *John* happened to die at *Ephesus*.

But while they fancy themselves, to be displaying the force of their reasoning and eloquence, they are but exposing their own ignorance, not only of the nature of those extraordinary powers,

powers, which are the ground of the dispute, but of the particular quæstion, against which they are disputing. For it is no where affirmed in the *Introductory Discourse*, as their way of arguing implies, that those powers either vanished instantaneously, upon the death of St. *John*; or subsisted even so long, as St. *John* remained alive: but the single point in dispute, as far as it arises from that Discourse, is, whether we have sufficient ground to believe, upon the testimony of the ancient Fathers, that they subsisted at all, after the days of the Apostles.

If the nature then of these powers be such, as I have signified above, and shall endeavour hereafter to demonstrate; and if what I am now disputing with regard to the same powers, should appear also to be true; some perhaps may be apt to demand, what it is, that we are to judge at last, concerning their real duration; and to what period we may reasonably venture to restrain them. And tho' such a demand be rather curious than pertinent, and the solution of it of no consequence to the point in debate; yet as we cannot help forming some opinion or other on all subjects, which have fallen under our particular observation, so I shall not scruple to declare in this, what I take to be the most probable, as far as I have been able to collect it, from the facts and instances relating to it, which are to be found in the New Testament: but I propose it only as a conjecture, which may excite others also, to search, and to guess for themselves, till they can hit upon something more satisfactory. In the mean while, my opinion in short is this; that in those first efforts of planting the Gospel, after our Lord's ascension, the extraordinary gifts which he had promised, were poured out in the fullest measure on the Apostles, and those

other Disciples, whom he had ordained to be the primary Instruments of that great work; in order to inable them, more easily to overrule the inveterate prejudices both of the Jews and Gentiles, and to bear up against the discouraging shocks of popular rage and persecution, which they were taught to expect in this noviciate of their ministry. But in process of time, when they had laid a foundation, sufficient to sustain the great fabrick designed to be erected upon it, and, by an invincible courage, had conquered the first and principal difficulties; and planted Churches in all the chief Cities of the *Roman* Empire, and settled a regular ministry to succede them, in the government of the same; it may reasonably be presumed, that as the benefit of miraculous powers began to be less and less wanted, in proportion to the increase of those Churches, so the use and exercise of them began gradually to decline; and as soon as Christianity had gained an establishment in every quarter of the known world, that they were finally withdrawn, and the Gospel left to make the rest of it's way, by it's own genuin strength, and the natural force of those divine graces, with which it was so richly stored, *faith, hope, and charity*: graces! which never fail to inspire all, who truly possess them, with a zeal and courage, which no terrors can daunt, nor worldly powers subdue. And all this, as far as I am able to judge, from the nature of the gifts themselves, and from the instances or effects of them, which I have any where observed, may probably be thought to have happened, while some of the Apostles were still living: who, in the times even of the Gospel, appear, on several occasions, to have been destitute of any extraordinary gifts: and of whose miracles, when we go beyond the limits of the Gospel, we meet with nothing in the later histories, on which we can depend, or nothing rather, but what is apparently fabulous. And as to St.

John

John in particular, who survived all the rest, the whole, that is delivered of him with any probability, is, " that he spent " the last years of his life in writing his Gospel and Revelations, and in visiting and confirming all those Churches of " *Asia*, which had been planted by himself and his brethren, " and were allotted to him, as his peculiar province [1]." But in the miraculous kind, the principal story related of him, is, *that being thrown, by the command of Domitian, into a caldron of boiling oil, he came out safe and unhurt from it*: in memory of which, a chappel was afterwards built, and is still remaining, at the *Latine Gate of Old Rome*; the spot, where the fact is supposed to have happened; in which I saw the story of it represented in painting. Yet this, with a few other trifling tales, which are recorded of the same Apostle, may justly be considered, as the fiction of the later ages.

But to return once more to the subject of the following sheets. The reader will find in them none of those arts, which are commonly employed by disputants, either to perplex a good cause, or to palliate a bad one; no subtil refinements, forced constructions, or evasive distinctions; but plain reasoning grounded on plain facts, and published with an honest and disinterested view, to free the minds of men from an inveterate imposture, which, through a long succession of ages, has disgraced the religion of the Gospel, and tyrannized over the reason and senses of the Christian world. In the pursuit of which end, I have shewn, by many indisputable facts, that the ancient Fathers, by whose authority that delusion was

[1] Vid. Testimonia de Johanne, præfixa Evangelio ejus a Millio, in Editione N. T. origi-

originally imposed, and has ever since been supported, were extremely credulous and superstitious; possessed with strong prejudices and an enthusiastic zeal, in favor, not onely of Christianity in general, but of every particular doctrine, which a wild imagination could ingraft upon it; and scrupling no art or means, by which they might propagate the same principles. In short; that they were of a character, from which nothing could be expected, that was candid and impartial; nothing, but what a weak or crafty understanding could supply, towards confirming those prejudices, with which they happened to be possessed; especially where religion was the subject, which above all other motives, strengthens every bias, and inflames every passion of the human mind. And that this was actually the case, I have shewn also by many instances; in which we find them roundly affirming as true, things evidently false and fictitious; in order to strengthen, as they fancied, the evidences of the Gospel; or to serve a present turn of confuting an adversary; or of inforcing a particular point, which they were laboring to establish.

The chief instrument, by which they acquired and maintained their credit in the world, was an appeal to *a divine and miraculous power*, as residing continually among them, and giving testimony to the truth of what they taught and practised. This is the particular quæstion, which I have undertaken here to examine: and, I persuade myself, that, as far as a negative can be demonstrated, I have proved all their appeals and positive attestations to be unworthy of any credit; mere words unsupported by facts; and in many cases directly confuted by opposite facts and testimonies. For example; among the mira-
culous

culous gifts, which are expressly claimed by the Fathers, we find these three; *the gift of raising the dead; of speaking with tongues; of understanding the holy Scriptures.* Now, with regard to the two first, the most signal and important of all gifts, after weighing all the circumstances relating to them, and all that antiquity has delivered concerning them, I find the strongest reason to be convinced, that there never was a genuine instance of either of them, in any age, after the days of the Apostles: which I collect, not onely from the improbability of the things themselves, as they are affirmed by the Fathers, but from facts also, which evince the contrary. And as to the third gift; it is allowed and frankly confessed by all, as well friends as enemies; that instead of a divine and infallible interpretation of the Scriptures, a most absurd and ridiculous method of interpreting them, was the very characteristic even of the earliest ages.

If any one therefore should be disposed to answer or confute, what I have affirmed in this book, he must take a different method, from what my Antagonists have hitherto pursued; must not expect, to bear down facts with systems; and from the supposed integrity and piety of the Fathers, to infer the certainty of what they attest: but must refer us to instances, which tally with their testimonies, and experimentally prove the truth of them. When any of the Fathers tell us then, *that many were raised from the dead in their days, in every place where there was a Christian Church, and lived afterwards several years among them; and that others were heard to speak in all kinds of languages:* these Answerers must shew, how those testimonies were verified by facts; and what particular persons were so raised, and indued with languages; or must alledge at least some special effects of those miracles, credibly reported by the ancient writers,

either Heathens or Christians. Again, when any of them declare, *that they were enlightened by the grace of God, with the gift of understanding the Scriptures*: it must be shewn, that those specimens, which they have given, as the fruit and proof of that gift will justify such a pretension, and may reasonably pass for divinely inspired. This, I say, is the onely way of answering, which can satisfy men of sense; and what alone can in any manner affect or invalidate the force of my argument.

T H E

Introductory Discourse.

IT is an opinion commonly received among Christians, and above all, among those of the *Romish* communion, that after the days of the Apostles, there resided still in the Primitive Church, through several successive ages, a divine and extraordinary power of working miracles, which was frequently and openly exerted, in confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, and for the conviction of unbelievers. This is generally alledged by the Divines of all Churches, in their disputes with the Sceptics, as a subsidiary proof of the Divinity of the Christian Doctrine; and as it is managed by the Church of *Rome*, is rendered more persuasive and affecting to the multitude, than what the Gospel itself affords, by deducing the succession of those apostolical gifts down to our own times, and offering the testimony of the same miracles to the senses even of the present Age.

This then being universally adopted by the Papists, as an indisputable fact, or an article rather of the Christian Faith; and espoused likewise in part by the Protestants, as subservient in some degree to the Christian cause, I thought it my duty to inquire into the grounds of it. For as it is the part of every Christian, to inform himself, as far as he is able, of every thing, which his religion requires him, either to believe or to practise, so it is more especially of those, whom Providence has

bleſſed with a capacity, and leiſure, and the opportunities of inquiring; nor yet merely for their own information, but for the inſtruction likewiſe of others, who want the ſame advantages.

It was this, which gave riſe to the preſent inquiry, and what induced me alſo, to publiſh the reſult of it. I was not led to the one, by an idle curioſity; nor to the other, by the vanity of combating eſtabliſhed opinions, but the duty of declaring my own: which, by the moſt impartial judgement, that I am able to form, I take not onely to be true, but uſeful alſo, and even neceſſary to the defence of Chriſtianity, as it is generally received, and ought always to be defended, in Pro-
teſtant Churches.

But if the facts and teſtimonies, which obliged me to embrace it, ſhould not have the ſame force, nor ſuggeſt the ſame reflections to others, I ſhall neither be ſurprized, nor concerned at it: for it is every man's right to judge for himſelf; and a difference of opinion is as natural to us, as a difference of taſt: and when the ſenſual faculties are perpetually paſſing different judgements on the ſame objects in different men, it cannot be thought ſtrange, that the intellectual, in which nature ſeems to have formed a greater diſparity, ſhould act with the ſame variety. But if to the principles implanted in our nature, we add that peculiar biaſs, which every individual receives from education, example, or habit; and conſider what ſtrong prejudices, a zeal for opinions once imbibed, or an intereſt eſpecially accruing from them, is apt to inſtill even into the better ſort, we ſhould have cauſe rather to wonder, that any number of men ſhould ever be of one mind, in any queſtion of
difficulty

difficulty or importance. Hence contrary doctrines in religion are frequently deduced from the same texts, and contrary systems of politics, from the same monuments.

Whatever judgement therefore any other man may form, or whatever he may write, on the subject of this performance, I shall not easily be drawn into any controversy with him about it: but contenting myself with the discharge of my own conscience, by this free declaration of my real sentiments, and indulging the same liberty to every body else, shall leave the rest to the judgement of the public. I do not mean however, by this profession, to preclude myself so intirely from all farther concern with the present argument, as not to be ready on all occasions, to acknowledge any mistake, of which I may be convinced, in the representation of any fact, or testimony, or character, which I have applied to the support of it, and to retract it, in the same public manner, in which I committed it.

But besides that general obligation, which is common to me with all other Christians, of searching into the origin and evidences of our religion, I found myself particularly excited to this task, by what I had occasionally observed and heard, of the late growth of Popery in this Kingdom, and the great number of Popish books, which have been printed and dispersed amongst us, within these few years: in which their writers make much use of that prejudice, in favor of *primitive antiquity*, which prevails even in this Protestant Country, towards drawing weak people into their cause, and shewing their worship to be the best, because it is the most conformable to that ancient pattern. But the most powerful of all their arguments, and what gains them the most proselytes, is, their confident attestation

of miracles, as subsisting still in their Church, and the clear succession of them, which they deduce through all history, from the Apostolic times, down to our own. This their Apologists never fail to display, with all the force of their rhetoric; and with good reason; since it is a proof, of all others, the most striking to vulgar minds, and the most decisive indeed to all minds, as far as it is believed to be true.

Thus one of their principal Champions, with whom I have been engaged, demonstrates the orthodoxy of their faith, and their true descent from that Church, to which our Lord has promised his presence to the end of the world. For speaking of the miracles of the Pagans, which I had opposed to those of the Papists, he says; “ God has been pleased in every age, “ to work far more evident miracles in his Church, by the “ ministry of his Saints; in raising the dead to life; in curing “ the blind and the lame; in casting out Devils; in healing “ in a moment inveterate diseases, and the like stupendous “ works of his power; attested by the most authentic monuments; and very frequently, as may be seen in the acts “ of the canonization of Saints, by the depositions of innumerable eye-witnesses, examined upon oath; and by the “ public notoriety of the facts: which kind of miracles, so “ authentically attested, will be to all ages a standing evidence, that the Church, in whose Communion they have “ all been wrought, is not that idolatrous, pagan Church, “ which the Doctor pretends, but the true spouse of Christ.” [a]

And

[a] See *Catholic Christian*. Pref. xviii.

N. B. I have been well informed, that among the deserters from the *English* army in *Flanders*, who were taken in the time

of the late rebellion and shot to death in *London*, there was one, who professed to die in the *Romish* Communion, and being asked by the Clergyman, who assisted him, what

And in a second piece, which the same writer has since published, he promises to give us an *history of the Christian miracles* in a particular treatise, deduced, I suppose, from the earliest ages, down to the present.

Now *these pious cheats of the Romish Church*, as Mr. Leslie says, *are the forest disgraces of Christianity, and bid the fairest of any one contrivance to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Christ, and the whole truth of the Gospel, by putting them all upon the same foot [b].* This history therefore of miracles, which is promised by that writer, induced me, more particularly at this time, to inquire into the genuine state and succession of them, through all the several ages of the Christian Church, from the times of the Apostles; in order to discover the precise period and duration of them; and to settle some rule of discerning the true from the false; so as to be able to give a proper reason, for admitting the miracles of one age, and rejecting those of another.

It must be confessed however, in the first place, that this claim of a miraculous power, which is now peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, was universally asserted and believed in all Christian countries, and in all ages of the Church, till the time of the

what were the motives, which induced him to forsake the religion, in which he was bred, made answer, " That a Priest of a very grave and civil behaviour had assured him, that miracles had been wrought in confirmation of the Popish doctrine, and particularly, that a Protestant woman came one day to their Sacrament, with intent to make sport with it, and instead of swallowing the consecrated bread, found means to convey it into her pocket; but when she

" was making merry afterwards in company, with what she had done, and was going to produce the piece of bread, which she had pocketed, she found it changed into real flesh and blood." And he added, " that there was no reason to imagine, that a person, of so reverend a character, could have any design or interest, to deceive him in the attestation of such a miracle."

[b] See *Leslie's Short method*, Vol. 1. p. 24.

Reformation. For Ecclesiastical History makes no difference between one age and another; but carries on the succession of it's miracles, as of all other common events, through all of them indifferently, to that memorable period. But the light of the Reformation dispelled the charm: and what *Cicero* says of the *Pythian Oracle*, may be as truly said of the Popish miracles; *when men began to be less credulous, their power vanished [c]*. For that spirit of inquiry, with which Christendom was then animated, detected the cheat, and exposed to public view, the hidden springs and machinery of those lying wonders, by which the world had been seduced and enslaved to the tyranny of *Rome [d]*.

And as the miracles of that age could not stand the test of a scrutiny, but were found, upon trial, to be the forgeries of a corrupt Clergy, so it gave just cause to suspect, that those *golden legends* of them as they were called, which had been transmitted to them from their Ancestors, were of no better stamp, and that the Church of Christ had long been governed by the same arts. This also was found to be true by those, who made it their business, to search into the records of past ages: where, though it was easy to trace the marks of the same fictions, ex-

[c] Quando autem ista vis evanuit an postquam homines minus creduli esse cœperunt? Cic. De Divin. 2. 57.

[d] Some of their Images were brought to *London*, and publicly broken there at *St. Paul's Cross*, in the sight of the people; that they might be fully convinced of the juggling impostures of the Monks. And in particular, the *Crucifix of Boxley in Kent*, commonly called *the Rood of Grace*; to which many pilgrimages had been made;

because it was observed sometimes to bow, and to lift itself up; to shake and stir it's head, hands and feet; to rowl it's eyes; move the lips; and bend it's brows: all which were looked upon by the abused multitude, as the effects of a divine power. These were now publicly discovered to have been cheats. For the springs were shewed, by which all these motions were made, &c.

See *Burnet's History of the Reformation*, Vol. I. 242.

erted in the same manner, and for the same ends, even up to the early times of the primitive Church, yet it was difficult, to fix the origin of them, or to mark the precise æra, in which the cheat first began.

Many learned men among the Protestants have attempted indeed to settle this point; but with so little success, as to leave it at last as uncertain, as they found it; none of them having been able to adjust the exact limits between true and false miracles, or to shew, by any solid reason, how long after the days of the Apostles, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit continued in the Church, or in what age they were actually withdrawn.

The most prevailing opinion is, that they subsisted through the three first Centuries, and then ceased in the beginning of the fourth; or as soon as Christianity came to be established by the civil power. This, I say, seems to be the most prevailing notion at this day, among the generality of the Protestants; who think it reasonable to imagine, that miracles should then cease, when the end of them was obtained, and the Church no longer in want of them; being now delivered from all danger, and secure of success, under the protection of the greatest power on earth.

Agreeably to this notion, Archbishop *Tillotson* says, “ that
 “ on the first planting of the Christian religion in the world,
 “ God was pleased to accompany it with a miraculous power;
 “ but after it was planted, that power ceased, and God left it
 “ to be maintained by ordinary ways.” And in another place, speaking of the particular gift, *of casting out Devils*, he observes,

“ that it continued the longest of any, and there was reason,
 “ that it should continue, as long as the Devil reigned, and
 “ Pagan Idolatry was kept up.—But when the powers of
 “ the world became Christian, and Satan’s kingdom was every
 “ where destroyed, then this miraculous gift also ceased, there
 “ being no farther occasion for it [e].” The late Dr. *Marshall* also, who translated the works of St. *Cyprian* into english, taking notice of the continuance of miracles and supernatural gifts, and especially of *prophecies and visions*, in that *Cyprianic* age, declares, “ that there are successive evidences of them, which
 “ speak full and home to this point, from the beginning of
 “ Christianity, down to the age of *Constantine*, in whose times,
 “ when Christianity had acquired the support of human powers,
 “ those extraordinary assistances were discontinued [f].” Yet this opinion, though generally received by the Protestants, is found liable still to such objections, and perplexed with such difficulties, that even those, who principally espouse it, cannot wholly acquiesce in it, but are forced to propose it with some reserve and exception.

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of the most zealous admirers of primitive Antiquity, and who has deduced the history of it’s miracles with the greatest accuracy, through the three first Centuries, closes his account of them, with the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity; not daring, as he frequently declares, to venture any farther, on account of *the fabulous genius and manifest impostures of the fourth Century* [g]. But though he supposes

[e] Serm. Fol. 3. it. Vol. 3. p. 488.
 Edit. 1735.

[f] Epistles of Cyp. VH. not. b.

[g] Fateor ibi multa legi, quarti seculi

impostorumque genium referentia, ut nolim ea certioribus immiscere—Quam fuerint quarti seculi Scriptores fabulis dediti, è vita Pauli Hieronymiana; & Athanasiana Anonij,

poses the true miracles to have generally ceased from that time, yet he finds some particular instances of them, so strongly attested by the Fathers of the best credit, through the rest of the same century, that he cannot but admit them, as exceptions to his general rule [b].

Mr. *Whiston* contends, “ that these miraculous powers were “ totally withdrawn at the very time when the *Athanasian He-* “ *resy*, as he calls it, was established by the second Council of “ *Constantinople*, about *A. D.* 381: and that as soon as the “ Church became *Athanasian*, *Antichristian*, and *Papish*, they “ ceased immediately, and the Devil lent it his own cheating “ and fatal powers in their stead [i].”

Dr. *Waterland* on the other hand, the perpetual defender of *Athanasius*, in his treatise on *the importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, often affirms, “ that the miraculous powers of the “ Church continued through the three first centuries at least, “ as a manifest proof, that the true faith was there preserved, “ where the spirit of truth so visibly resided [k]:” and in the addenda to the same work, he corrects himself, as it were, for a mistake, in confining them to such narrow limits, which, on the authority of *Paulinus*, he endeavours to extend, to the latter end of the fourth century [l].

Antonij, &c. intelligimus. Dissert. in Iren. 2. §. LV.

Ex ipsa miraculorum historia satis constat, a quarto tandem seculo & temporibus *Eusebij*, sensim decrevisse vera, & in de-
fectu abesse miracula. ib. lxx.

Ego me infra prima secula contineo, ante receptam in Imperio Christianitatem, &c. ib. lxxi.

[b] *Chrysostomus*—fatetur suo etiamnum

tempore nonnulla fuisse signa, sed & numero pauca, & locis variis hinc inde dispersa.—Qui hæc itaque agnovit negatis tamen aliis, erat proculdubio & illa agniture, si pari omnia evidentia constitissent. ib. lxx.

[i] See his Account of the *Dæmoniacks*, p. 65.

[k] See p. 299, 382, 383, 425.

[l] Ibid. p. 497.

Dr. *Chapman* declares, “ that tho’ the establishment of Christianity by the civil power, abated the necessity of miracles, and occasioned a visible decrease of them, yet after that revolution, there were instances of them still, as public, as clear, as well attested, as any in the earlier ages [m].”

And not content, like Dr. *Waterland*, with carrying the succession of them, to the end of the fourth century, he goes on to assure us, *that the fifth also had its portion, tho’ smaller than the fourth* [n]: which he confirms by several instances, drawn from the middle of that fifth century, and then refers us to Dr. *Berrian*, for the accurate defence of another miracle, wrought in confutation of the *Arian Herefy*, which brings us to the end of it [o].

Thus these eminent Divines, pursuing their several systems, and ambitious of improving still upon each other’s discoveries, seem unwarily to have betrayed the Protestant cause, by transferring the miraculous powers of the Church, the pretended insigns of truth and orthodoxy, into the hands of it’s enemies; and yielding up this sacred depositum, like the old *Ancilia* of *Pagan Rome*, to the defence and support of *Popish Rome*. For it was in these very primitive ages, and especially in the *third, fourth and fifth centuries, those flourishing times of miraculous powers*, as Dr. *Chapman* calls them, in which the chief corruptions of Popery were either actually introduced, or the seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits, which we now see. By these corruptions I mean, *the institution of Monkery; the worship of reliques; invocation of Saints;*

[m] See *Miscell. Trans.* p. 170.

[o] *Ibid.* p. 175.

[n] *Ibid.* p. 173.

prayers for the Dead; the superstitious use of Images; of the Sacraments; of the Sign of the Cross; and of consecrated oil; by the efficacy of all which rites, and as a proof of their divine origin, perpetual miracles are affirmed to have been wrought in these very centuries.

For example; Monkery had it's beginning in the third, and a full establishment in the fourth century: in which all the principal Fathers of the Church, both *Greek* and *Latin*, employed their authority and eloquence, to extol the perfection and recommend the practice of it; by writing the lives of particular Monks; celebrating their wonderful sanctity and miraculous gifts; and founding monasteries also, where-ever they travelled. St. *Athanasius* was one of the first, who, from the pattern of the *Ægyptian* Monasteries introduced them into *Italy and Rome*, where they had been held before in utter contempt [*p*]. St. *Basil* calls it an *Angelical institution: a blessed and Evangelic life, leading to the mansions of the Lord* [*q*]. St. *Jerom* declares, *the Societies of Monks and Nuns, to be the very flower and most precious stone among all the ornaments of the Church* [*r*]. St. *Chrysostom* calls it, *a way of life worthy of heaven, nor at all inferior to that of Angels* [*s*]. And St. *Austin* styles them always, in a peculiar manner, *the Servants*

of

[*p*] Ignominiosum, ut tunc putabatur, & vile in populis nomen—Hieron. Oper. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 780. Edit. Benediſt.

[*q*] Basil. Oper. Tom. 3. p. 101, 261, 310, 473.

[*r*] Certe flos quidam & pretioſiſſimus lapis inter Eccleſiaſtica ornamenta, Monachorum & Virginum chorus eſt. Hieron. ib. p. 551.

[*s*] Καὶ γὰρ πολλοὶ τῶν ἁγίων ὀρίπυσαν ἑλάντο, καὶ ἀγγέλων ἔδει χεῖρον διακεῖναι.

Chryſ. Oper. Tom. 1. p. 94. A. Edit. Benediſt.

N. B. This ſame Father wrote three books againſt the *Oppugners of the Monaſtic life*; [Oper. T. 1. p. 44.] and a ſeparate one beſides, to prove it to be preferable even to that of a King. [ib. p. 116.] Among many other inſtances of this preference, he obſerves that a King, when depoſed and fallen from his throne, cannot recover it without the utmoſt difficulty; whereas a Monk,

of God [t]. By the influence therefore of these Fathers, and the many lies and forged miracles, which they diligently propagated in honor of the Monks, innumerable Monasteries, as they themselves tell us, were over the *eastern World*; but especially in *Syria, Palæstine and Egypt*; whose deserts were covered with them; and where, in the next age, there were some, which are said to have had *five thousand Monks* in them [u].

As to the *reliques of the Martyrs*, we find St. *Chrysostom* frequently haranguing on the great blessings, which the Church reaped from them, and the daily miracles which were wrought by them [x]: and he concludes one of his Homilies, on Two female Martyrs, *Bernice and Prosdice*, in the following manner; “ with this ardor therefore, let us fall down before their reliques: “ let us embrace their coffins; for these may have some power, “ since their bones have so great an one: and not onely on the

Monk, who falls from his virtue, quickly recovers it by his penitence: of which he gives a curious example, in a story, which he relates in another place, of an old Monk, who after he had nobly sustained all the difficulties and fatigues of that discipline, was caught at last by the wiles of Satan, and fired with so violent a concupiscence for women, that he ran away from his Cell, to a bawdy-house in the neighbouring City, in order to quench his flame: where he had no sooner satiated his lust, than returning presently to his duty, he became so strict a penitent, that within a short time after, when the country was afflicted with a famine, the people were directed by an express revelation from heaven, to apply to him, as the onely person, who could relieve them from it by his prayers; by the force of which, the fa-

mine was accordingly averted. Ibid. 29. 30.

[t] *De Servis Dei* sæpissime dicitur, tot annos ille in hoc vel in illo Monasterio sedit. August. Serm. 215. Op. T. 5. p. 947. D. Edit. Bened.

Cupiebas in ea vita vivere, in qua *Servi Dei*, Monachi vivunt. Epist. ad Bonifac. 220. T. 2. p. 812.

[u] Exemplo itaque ejus, per totam Palæstinam innumerabilia Monasteria esse cœperunt. [Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 82.] Quid referamus Armenios, quid Persas, quid Indiæ & Æthiopiz populos, ipsamque juxta Ægyptum, fertilem Monachorum—cunctaque Orientis examina—ibid. p. 551.

[x] Ἰκανα μὴν τὸν λόγον πειρώσασθαι, καὶ τὰ καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ τῶν μαρτύρων γνωμόμενα θαύματα. Chrysost. Op. T. 2. p. 555. Ed. Bened.

“ day of their Festival, but on other days likewise, let us fix
 “ ourselves as it were to them, and entreat them to be our
 “ patrons [y]:” and in his other Homilies, he often uses the
 same peroration “ to dwell in their Sepulchres, to fix them-
 “ selves to their coffins; that not onely their bones, but their
 “ tombs, and their urns also overflowed with benedictions [z].”

St. *Basil* informs us, “ that all, who were pressed with any
 “ difficulty or distress, used to fly for relief to the tombs of
 “ the Martyrs; and whosoever did but touch their reliques, ac-
 quired some share of their sanctity [a].” In the same age also,
 when *Vigilius*, a learned and eminent Presbyter of the Church
 wrote a book just as a Protestant would now write, *against the*
institution of Monks; the celibacy of the Clergy; praying for the dead,
and to the Martyrs; adoring their reliques; celebrating their Vigils;
and lighting up candles to them after the manner of the Pagans; St.
Jerom, who answers him, defends all those rites with a most
 outrageous zeal and acrimony of language, and treats *Vigilan-*
tius, as a most profligate Heretic, uttering the blasphemies, with
 which the Devil had inspired him against the sacred doctrines of
 the Church: “ Answer me, says he, how it comes to pass,
 “ that in this vile dust and ashes of the Martyrs, there is so
 “ great a manifestation of signs and wonders. I see, thou most
 “ wretched of mortals, what thou art so grieved at, what so
 “ afraid of; that unclean spirit, which compels thee to write
 “ thus, has oft been tortured, and even now is tortured by this
 “ vile dust [b].” St. *Austin* also affirms, “ that at *Milan*, while
 “ he was there present, the reliques of the Martyrs, *Protasius*

[y] Ibid. p. 645. C.

[b] Hieron. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 285.

[z] Ibid. p. 669. E.

286.

[a] Basil. Op. T. 2. p. 155. it. T. 3.

“ and *Gervasius*, which lay buried in a place unknown, were
 “ reveled to St. *Ambrose* in a dream; and that by the touch
 “ onely of the same reliques, a blind man was restored to his
 “ sight; of which the whole people was witness, who flock-
 “ ed in crouds to the bodies of the said Martyrs [c].”

In the sacrament also of *the Eucharist*, several strange abuses were introduced long before this fourth age. In *Justin Martyr's* time, within fifty years after the days of the Apostles, *the cup was constantly mixed with water, and a portion of the consecrated elements sent also to the absent [d]*: which soon became the source of much Superstition. For that mixture, considered at first as prudential onely, and indifferent, is declared by *Irenæus*, *to have been taught and practised by our Saviour [e]*; and by St. *Cyprian*, to have been enjoined to himself by a divine revelation [f]. The consecrated bread also, which was sent at first onely to the sick, was in *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days, carried home by the communicants, and locked up in boxes as a divine treasure for their private use [g]. From this time it began to work Miracles; and was applied to drive Devils out of haunted houses [h]; and carried with them by people, in their journeys and voya-

[c] Immenso populo teste res gesta est. De Civ. Dei. lib. 22. c. 8. Vid. etiam Hieron. ibid. p. 552. Samaritanam pergere, & Johannis Baptistæ, & Elisæi, & Abdiæ pariter cineres adorare.

[d] Just. Mart. Apol. 1. p. 96. Edit. Thirlb.

[e] Accipiens panem, suum corpus esse confitebatur; & temperamentum calicis, suum sanguinem confirmavit. Iren. l. 4. c. 57. it. l. 5. c. 2. & 36.

[f] Nec nos putes, nostra & humana conscribere, aut ultronea voluntate hoc no-

bis audacter assumere—admonitos autem nos scias, ut in calice offerendo Domini- ca traditio fervetur—ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur. Epist. ad Cæcil. 63. Edit. Rigalt.

[g] Cum quædam arcam suam, in qua Domini sanctum fuit, manibus indignis tentasset aperire, igne inde surgente deterita est. Cypr. de Lapsis. p. 176.

[h] Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula, in ejus nomine, sive per Sacramenta ejus, &c. Vid. August. de Civ. D. 22. 8. §. 1, 6.

ges, as an amulet or charm, to secure them from all dangers both by sea and land [i].

This Sacrament was administered likewise, in all their public communions, to infants, even of the tenderest age, before they were able to speak [k]: and was constantly stiled, *the Sacrifice of the body of Christ; which was always offered up, as Cyprian says, for the Martyrs, in their annual Festivals: as it was also, according to St. Jerom, by the Bishop of Rome, over the venerable bones of St. Peter and St. Paul [l].* Hence flowed those amazing titles, which were given to it in this fourth age; of *most tremendous mystery; dreadful solemnity; terrible to Angels; Mystic table [m]; whose very Utenfils and sacred coverings, as St. Jerom says, were not to be considered, like things inanimate, and void of sense, to have no sanctity, but to be worshipped with the same majesty, as the body and*

[i] *St. Ambrose* relates a remarkable instance of this, in the case of one of his intimate friends, called *Satyrus*; who was a pious and zealous Christian, but had not yet received the Sacrament, or *been initiated*, as he calls it, *in the more perfect mysteries*. In this state, he happened to suffer Shipwreck in his passage from Afric, and the Ship itself to be broken to Pieces, upon which, says *Ambrose*, “*Satyrus* not being
“ afraid of death, but to die onely, be-
“ fore he had partaken of those mysteries,
“ begged of some of the company, who
“ had been initiated, that they would
“ lend him the divine Sacrament, (which
“ they carried about with them) not to
“ feed his curiosity, by peeping into the
“ inside of the Box, but to obtain the be-
“ nefit of his Faith, for he wrapped up
“ the Mysteries in his Handkerchief, and
“ then tying it about his neck, threw

“ himself into the Sea; never troubling
“ himself to look out for a plank, which
“ might help him to swim, since he want-
“ ed nothing more, than the Arms of his
“ Faith: nor did his Hopes fail him, for
“ he was the first of the company, who
“ got safe to the Shore.” *De Excessu*
Satyri, l. i. §. 43, 44. p. 1125. *Op. T.* 2.
Ed. Bened.

[k] *Cypr. ibid.* p. 175.

[l] *Sacrificia pro eis semper, ut memi-
nistis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum passio-
nes & dies, anniversaria commemoratione
celebramus. Id. Epist. 34. p. 48. Vid. it.
Hieron. T. 4. par. 2. p. 284.*

[m] *Επ' αὐτῶν πάλιν Φρικωδεσάτων
μυστηρίων. [Chrysost. Oper. T. x. p. 568.]
τραπέζης καὶ σφόδρα Φρικωδεσάτης. [ib. p.
245. D.] ἦν καὶ Ἀγγέλλοι Φρίτῃσι. Id. T.
xi. p. 22. C.*

blood of our Lord [n]. And what is all this, but a description of *that Sacrifice of the Mass*, which the *Romanists* offer at this day, both *for the living and the dead*; and the same miraculous tales, which they still relate, of their *transubstantiated bread*?

The custom of *praying for the dead*, had also a very early origin: for it was common, as we learn from *Tertullian*, even in the second century [o]; and became the universal practice of the following ages: so that in the fourth, we find it reckoned as a sort of *Herefy*, to deny the efficacy of it [p]. The purpose of it was to procure relief and refreshment to the departed souls, in some intermediate state of expiatory pains, which, according to the opinion of those times, all men were to suffer for their sins, except the Martyrs, and Saints of the first class [q.] A doctrine and practice, which could not fail of giving birth to the Popish Purgatory.

[n] Ut discant, qui ignorant, —qua debeant veneratione sancta suscipere, & altaris Christi ministerio deservire; sacrosque calices, & sancta velamina, & cetera, quæ ad cultum Dominicæ passionis pertinent, non quasi inania & sensu carentia, sanctimoniam non habere, sed ex consortio corporis & sanguinis Domini, eadem qua corpus ejus & sanguis majestate veneranda. Hieron. Ep. 88. ad Theophil. T. 4. par. 2. 728.

[o] Enimvero & pro anima ejus orat, & refrigerium interim adpostulat ei, & in prima resurrectione consortium, & offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus. De Monogam. x. p. 682. A. Edit. Nic. Rigalt. N. B. This passage may want a little explication. *Tertullian*, in this treatise, is labouring to prove, that the second marriages of Chri-

tians are utterly unlawful, and forbidden to them by the Gospel, and though the parties be separated from each other by the death of either, that the matrimonial bond still subsists, and obliges the Survivor: *For the widow*, says he, *prays for the Soul of her departed husband*; and *begs refreshment for him in his intermediate state*; and *to be a partner with him in the first resurrection*; and *makes an oblation for him every year, on the Day of his death*. By all which she acknowledges and keeps up her conjugal union, and cannot therefore marry any other man; because, to have one husband in the Spirit and another in the Flesh, is adultery, &c.

[p] Vid. Epiphani. Hæres. lxxv. § 3 and 7.

[q] Vid. Orig. con. Celsum. l. 6. p. 292. Tertull. De. Anim. c. 55, 58.

The *Sign of the Cross* likewise, was the subject of much superstition in those ages. “ *Every step that we take, says Tertullian; when we come in or go out; put on our cloaths, or our shoes; when we bath, eat, light up candles, go to bed, or sit down; we mark our foreheads with the sign of the Cross.* “ If for these, and other acts of discipline of the same kind, you demand a text of Scripture, you will find none; but tradition will be alledged to you, as the prescriber of them [r].” It was thought a sure preservative against all sorts of malignity, poisons, or fascination; and effectual to drive away evil spirits; and is affirmed by the principal Fathers of the fourth century, to have wrought many illustrious miracles. “ This sign, says St. Chrysostom, both in the days of our Forefathers, and in our own, has thrown open gates, that were shut; destroyed the effects of poisonous drugs; dissolved the force of hemlock; and cured the bites of venomous beasts [s].”

The *sacred oil* also of the Church, was held in great veneration in these same days, as an universal remedy in all diseases. For which purpose, it was either prepared and dispensed by Priests and holy Monks; or was taken from *the lamps* which were burning before the reliques of the Martyrs. St. Jerom mentions great numbers, who had been cured of *the bites of venomous animals, by touching their wounds with the first sort* [t]: And

[r] Ad omnem progressum atque motum; ad omnem aditum atque exitum, ad vestitum, ad calciatum, ad lavacra, ad mensas, ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad sedilia, quæcunque nos conversatio exercet, frontem crucis signaculo terimus. Harum & aliarum ejusmodi disciplinarum si legem expostules Scripturarum, nullam invenies, traditio tibi prætendetur autrix, &c. De

Coron. 3.

[s] Τὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν προσώπων ἡμῶν, καὶ νῦν, θύρας ἀνέῳξε καὶ λυσιμύνας, &c. Tom. 7. p. 552. A.

[t] Benedicto itaque oleo universi agri colæ atque pastores, tangentes vulnera, certam salutem resumebant. Vit. S. Hilariion. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 86.

St. *Cbryſoſtom* ſpeaks of many, who had been healed of their diſtempers, *by anointing themſelves with the ſecond* [u]. And St. *Auſtin* affirms, from his own knowledge, that a *young woman had been freed from a Devil*; and a *young man reſtored even from death to life, by the uſe of it* [x].

Laſtly, as to *Images and pictures*, it appears from St. *Cbryſoſtom*, that great numbers of them were ſtanding in the principal Churches of that age [y]; and from the other writers of the ſame age; that the acts of the Saints and Martyrs began to be painted on the walls of thoſe particular Churches, which were dedicated to their names [z]: and it is natural to imagine, that they would not long be conſidered, as mere ornaments, or memorials, or books, as they were called, for the illiterate, but would gradually acquire a ſhare of that veneration, which the bones of thoſe, whom they repreſented, had already acquired in the ſame Churches: and we are told accordingly by St. *Auſtin*, that he knew many, *who were actually the adorers of them* [a].

Theſe were the principles and the practices of the fourth Century; as they are declared by the moſt eminent Fathers of

[u] Καὶ ἴσασιν ὅσοι μετὰ τῷς τῶς καὶ τῷ καίρῳ ἐλαίῳ χριſτάμενοι νοσήματα ἔλυσαν Chryſ. ib. p. 337. C.

[x] Hipponenſem quandam Virginem ſcio, cum ſe oleo perunxiſſet, cui pro illa orans Preſbyter inſtillaverat lacrymas ſuas, mox a Dæmonio fuiſſe ſanata. [De Civ. D. l. 22. c. 8. §. 8.]

Rurſus apud nos, *Irenæi* ujuſdam filius ægitudine extinctus eſt. Cumque corpus jaceret exanimum, atque exequiæ pararentur, amicorum quidam ſuggeſſit, ut ejus-

dem Martyris oleo, corpus perungeretur. Factum eſt, & revixit. ibid. §. 18.

[y] Oper. Tom. xi. p. 78.

[z] Forte requiratur quanam ratione gerendi

Sederit hæc nobis ſententia, *pingere Sanctas*

Raro more damos, &c. Vid. Paulini Oper. Natal. ix.

[a] Novi multos eſſe Sepulchrorum & picturarum adoratores. De Morib. Eccleſ. Cathol. Op. T. i. p. 34.

that age: whence every one may see, what a resemblance they bear to the present rites of the Popish Church. But some perhaps will be apt to suspect, that I am really defending the corruptions of that Church, by assigning to them an origin so ancient and venerable: and the suspicion indeed may seem plausible, since I have been saying little else, but what the Papists themselves would say on the same occasion. Yet it is no more, than what fact and truth oblige me to say; and no controversy, I hope, will ever heat me, or prejudice bias me so far, as to make me deny or dissemble, what the conviction of my own mind requires me to confess. But whatever advantage the Romanists may hope to reap from this concession, it really gives them none at all. Our dispute with them is, not how ancient, but how true their doctrines and practices are: And if they are not derived from Christ or his Apostles, nor founded in the holy Scriptures, it is wholly indifferent to us Protestants, from what age they drew their birth; whether it was from the *four first*, or the *four last* centuries of the Church.

But this short sketch, which I have been giving of those primitive times, was not designed so much to illustrate the origin of their rites, as to lay open the grounds of their miracles; and to shew what reasons the Romish Church hath to espouse, and what the Protestant Churches, if they are consistent with themselves, to suspect and disclame them. For example, after the conversion of the *Roman Empire* to Christianity, we shall find the greatest part of their boasted miracles to have been wrought either by *Monks*, or *Reliques*, or *the Sign of the Cross*, or *consecrated Oil*: wherefore if we admit the Miracles, we must necessarily admit the rites, for the sake of which they were wrought: they both rest on the same bottom, and mutually establish each other.

other. For it is a maxim, which must be allowed by all Christians, that whenever any sacred rite or religious institution becomes the instrument of miracles, we ought to consider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation. “ I know, says one
 “ of the ablest writers of the *Romish* Church, by the evidence
 “ of manifest and incorrupt tradition, that there hath always
 “ been a never-interrupted succession of men from the Apostles
 “ time, believing, professing, and practising such and such
 “ doctrines, by evident argument of credibility, as miracles,
 “ sanctity, unity, &c. and by all those ways, whereby the
 “ Apostles and our blessed Saviour himself confirmed their doc-
 “ trines: And we are assured, that what the said never-inter-
 “ rupted Church proposeth, doth deserve to be accepted and
 “ acknowledged as a divine truth [b].” And thus far we must
 own, the Jesuit argues rightly; that if we receive those *argu-
 ments of credibility*, as he calls them, we must receive the doc-
 trines which accompany them, as so many *divine verities, re-
 veled and attested by Almighty God*. So that if the authority of a
Chrysostom, or a *Jerom*, or an *Austin* can oblige us to believe
 the miracles of the fourth century, they must oblige us also, to
 espouse the rites, which those miracles confirmed, and those
 Fathers practised.

Dr. *Chapman* however, not aware perhaps of this consequence, or not allowing it to have any force, is not satisfied with asserting the miracles of the fourth century, but, as if more were still wanted to the support of the Christian cause, frankly undertakes the defence also of the fifth; in which all those superstitious practices, above mentioned, had gained a greater

[b] See Mr. *Knot*, on Charity maintain- 7th Edit. c. vi. p. 228. §. 6.
 ed, &c. in the Works of *Chillingworth*,

root, and more general establishment : And while the warmest admirers of the primitive times, can hardly digest the wonderful tales of the fourth age, on the united testimony of all its renowned Fathers, he thinks himself obliged, to espouse those of the more corrupt age, which follows, upon the single authority of *Theodoret*.

But to this, I shall speak more fully hereafter, in the following work ; where I shall consider those particular miracles, which *Dr. Chapman* has selected, as the proper objects of our belief, and defended as such, against the enemies of the Christian faith. In the mean while, I shall offer onely a single passage from the same *Theodoret*, on whose testimony he lays so great a stress, which will help, not onely to confirm what I have already been advancing, but give us a specimen also, of the character of this Father, as well as of the state of Christianity in this fifth age.

“ The Temples of our Martyrs, says he, are shining and
 “ conspicuous : eminent for their grandor, and the variety
 “ of their ornaments ; and displaying far and wide the splen-
 “ dor of their beauty. These we visit, not once or twice, or
 “ five times in the year, but frequently offer up hymns each day
 “ to the Lord of them ; in health we beg the continuance of
 “ it ; in sickness, the removal of it ; the childless beg children,
 “ and the barren to become mothers ; and when these blessings
 “ are obtained, we beg the secure enjoyment of them. When
 “ we undertake any journey, we beg them to be our compa-
 “ nions and guides in it : and when we return safe, we pay
 “ them our thanks : and that those, who pray with faith and
 “ sincerity, obtain what they ask, is manifestly testified by the
 “ number

“ number of offerings, which are made to them, in consequence
 “ of the benefits received. For some offer the figures of eyes ;
 “ some of feet ; some of hands, made either of gold or of silver ;
 “ which the Lord accepts, tho’ but of little value ; measuring
 “ the gift, by the faculties of the giver. But all these are the
 “ evident proofs of the cures of as many distempers ; being pla-
 “ ced there, as monuments of the fact, by those, who have
 “ been made whole. The same monuments likewise proclaim
 “ the power of the dead. Whose power also demonstrates
 “ their God, to be the true God [c].”

Now this is nothing else, but the very picture of that same superstition, which is practised at this day by the Papists, and was borrowed of old from the Pagans [d]. *Livy* tells the same thing of the Temples of the Heathen Gods which *Theodoret* does here of the Temples of their Saints ; that *they were rich in the number of offerings*, which the people used to make *in return for the cures*, and benefits which they had received from them [c]. In both cases, we allow the offerings to be real, but take the cures, or the miraculous part of them at least, to be imaginary : and as we reject *Livy’s* miracles without scruple, or any hurt to the faith of history, so we may reject *Theodoret’s* too, without shaking the evidence of any thing else, that is credible.

Thus we see, to what a state of things, the miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries would reduce us : they would call us back again to the old superstition of our ancestors ; would fill us with *Monks and reliques, and Masses*, and all the other trinkets,

[c] Serm. 8. de Martyrib.

[d] See my Letter from *Rome* on this subject.

[e] Epidaurus, inclita Æsculapij nobili

templo,—tum donis dives erat, quæ remedium salutarium ægri mercedem sacra-
 verant Deo. lib. 45. 28.

which the treasury of *Rome* can supply : for this is the necessary effect of that zeal, which would engage us in the defence of them. But if the miracles of these later ages must needs be rejected ; and if, as I have said above, Ecclesiastical History makes no difference between them, and those of the earlier ages, it may reasonably be asked, where then are we to stop ? and to what period must we confine ourselves ? And this indeed is the grand difficulty, which was the chief object of my attention, through this whole inquiry ; and what has puzzled all the other Doctors, who have been considering the same question before me. But before I give any answer to it, or declare my own opinion, it may be proper, to premise a remark or two, on the insufficiency of the several systems already advanced ; and to lay down some general principles, which may lead us to a more rational solution of the matter, than what has hitherto been offered.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as we have seen above, chuses to shut up the history of true miracles with the *three first centuries* ; condemning those of the fourth, as generally forged and fabulous : for the proof of which, he appeals to the monstrous fictions, which St. *Atbanasius*, St. *Jerom*, and St. *Gregory of Nyssa*, have related. And thus far, I intirely agree with him ; that the pretended miracles of this age are utterly incredible ; and particularly those, to which he refers us, and to which we might add many more, affirmed also from their own knowledge, by St. *Austin*, St. *Epiphanius*, and all the other Saints of the same times. Yet after so free a censure on the miracles of the fourth age, the same learned writer thinks it necessary still, to make some exceptions, for a few of them, which St *Cbrysostom* has attested. But such a distinction appears to be wholly groundless :

or if there be any difference between this particular Father and the rest of them, it is clearly to the disadvantage of *Chrysoſtom*, when conſidered in the character of a witneſs. For his peculiar talents were thoſe of a declamatory Preacher, whoſe art lay, in warming the paſſions, not in convincing the reaſon; and whoſe pompous ſtile and rhetorical flouriſhes, inſtead of being adapted to a ſimple narrative of plain facts, was apt rather to exaggerate plain facts into miracles [f]. And as there is no ground for any preference, in his perſonal character, ſo there is none likewise in the particular miracles, which he atteſts; which are all ſaid to be wrought, not by the miniſtry of any living and holy men, but by the *reliques of the dead*; or the *oil of their lamps*; or the *ſign of the Croſs*.

Dr. *Waterland* ſeems to have been of the ſame mind in general with Mr. *Dodwell*, concerning the miracles of the fourth century; yet being loth to part with them, and much more, to fix any ſlur on the credit of it's principal Fathers, has uſed a little artifice in the manner of declaring it. For after he has often affirmed, *that the miraculous powers of the Church ſubſiſted through the three firſt centuries* at leaſt, he adds the following amendment to it, *Nay, and if we may believe Paulinus, who reports it as an eye-witneſs, they continued down to the latter end of the fourth* [g]. But why muſt we be referred to *Paulinus* onely, in a quæſtion of ſuch importance? a name, unknown to the greateſt part of his readers; while the names of *Athanaſius*, *Baſil*, *Auſtin*, *Jerom*, *Chryſoſtom*, are in every body's mouth, and appealed to by himſelf on every other occaſion; and who have

[f] *Ac ne forſitan Rhetores vobis diſpliceant, quorum artis eſt veriſimilia magis, quam vera dicere*——Hieron. Oper.

T. 4. par. 2. p. 236.

[g] Import. of the Trin. p. 497.

written whole books, on the miracles of that very age, wrought by *Saints, and Monks, and Reliques*; many of which they have reported likewise, as eye-witnesses, as well as *Paulinus*. The omission therefore of these greater names, which could not possibly be accidental, is a clear, tho' tacit confession that he knew them all to have forfeited their credit, in this particular cause: and that even his beloved *Atbanasius*, on whose faith he had pinned his own, and on the defence of whose orthodoxy, he had spent his whole life and studies, was not to be trusted at last with the report of a miracle,

But what is it after all, that *Paulinus* could teach us, more credibly than any of the rest? He was a noble convert from Paganism, and Bishop of *Nola* in *Italy*: where he built a Church to St. *Felix* the Martyr, with whose acts he painted it, and with whose reliques he enriched it; and has celebrated, both in prose and verse, the miracles performed by those reliques [*b*]. But the particular miracle, for which we are referred to him by the Doctor as an eye-witness, is this; that “ when St. *Ambrose*, upon the conviction of a certain offender, was pronouncing the sentence of excommunication against him; in the very instant of delivering him over to Satan, and while the words were yet in his mouth, the Devil began to seize and tear him, as his own, to the great amazement and wonder of *Paulinus*, and the rest, who were present [*i*].”

On the whole then; after the strictest attention to what both the antients and the moderns also have delivered on this subject,

[*b*] Vid. *Paulin. Peom.* xvii. p. 77, [*i*] See Dr. *Waterland*, *ibid.*
78. *Oper. Edit. Par.* 4to.

I find great reason to be convinced, that the pretended miracles of the fourth century, were not onely in general, and for the greatest part, but intirely and universally, the effects of fraud and imposture. Nor can I see the least ground to admit any exception, either with Mr. *Dodwell*, for those reported by St. *Chrysostom*; or with Dr. *Waterland*, for those by *Paulinus*: For I take it to be a maxim, on which we may safely depend, that wherever the Bishops, the Clergy, and the principal Champions of the Christian cause, are found to be tampering with false miracles, and establishing new rites and doctrine by lies and forgeries, it would be vain for us, to look for any true miracles in that age, and that Church. And this was actually the case of the fourth century: in which all it's most illustrious Fathers, now Saints of the Catholic Church; St. *Athanasius*, St. *Epiphanius*, St. *Basil*, St. *Gregory of Nyssa*, St. *Ambrose*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Austin*, and St. *Chrysostom* have all severally recorded and solemnly attested a number of miracles, said to be wrought in confirmation of some favorite institutions of those days, which, in the judgment of all the learned and candid Protestants, are manifestly fictitious, and utterly incredible.

We have now therefore gained some footing and ground as it were to stand upon. For this discovery of the state of the fourth century, will reflect fresh light on our searches, both backwards and forwards; and from it's middle situation, give us a clearer view, as well into the earlier, as the later ages. For example; if we suppose the miraculous powers of the Church to have been withdrawn, in the beginning of this century, the first inference, which it suggests, is, that they were withdrawn likewise through all the succeeding centuries. Because the reasons, for which they are imagined to have ceased at this particular

particular period, grow stronger still in every later age, as the Church was every day gaining strength and a firmer establishment, not onely from the protection of the Magistrate, but from an authority and power of it's own, independent on the civil Government.

But above all, when, in all these later ages, instead of meeting with genuin miracles, we find fables and fictions, assuming that sacred character, and abounding still more and more, and, by the pretence of a divine authority, giving a sanction to *Heathenish Rites and superstitious Doctrines*, it would be childish, to expect the revival of real miracles, unless it were to detect and destroy the effects of those false ones, which were so evidently corrupting the faith and worship of the Christian Church. Since the miracles then of the fifth century, which our Doctors so strenuously defend, instead of defeating the frauds of the fourth, tend still to confirm them; being performed chiefly by the same instruments, and for the same ends; we must necessarily rank them all under the same class of mere forgeries. But these advocates of the primitive miracles have not yet given us the least hint, or reason to imagine, that they intend to stop here, or to confine themselves even to the fifth century: since the same principles which carried them so far, would carry them still farther, if the credit of Ecclesiastical History, or it's miracles should happen to be attacked by an Infidel or Heretic.

For example; *Pope Gregory* the first, commonly called *the Great*, wrote *four books of Dialogues*, in which he describes *the lives and miracles of the Italian Monks*; many of them from his own knowledge, and the rest, as he declares, from the testimony of grave and venerable persons, on whose fidelity he could depend.

depend. These books were written in the end of the sixth century, and are filled with a number of stories, so grossly absurd, and fabulous, that it would be difficult, one would think, to find any old woman in these days, so weakly credulous, as to believe them. They inform us of many persons “ actually” “ raised from the dead; many blind restored to sight; and, all “ sorts of diseases cured, by the prayers or touch of those “ Monks [k]: Of their walking upon water, as freely as upon “ dry land; of rivers drawn by them from their natural course, “ and following them into a new channel, which they traced “ out to them. Of inundations of water rising up almost to “ the roofs of Churches, without entering the doors of them, “ which stood open: Of the arm of an Executioner, fixed up- “ right in the air, as it was lifted up, to strike off the head of “ one of those holy men, and restored by him on condition, “ that it should never again behead any Christian: Of vessels “ of oil and wine miraculously replenished; and of pieces of “ gold, as fresh as from the mint, dropt from heaven into their “ laps:” with numberless other miracles, more trifling still and despicable, contrived chiefly to advance *the honour of Monks; the worship of Saints and of the blessed Virgin; the belief of a Purgatory; and the divine effects of Holy Water, &c.* [l].

The apparent forgery of these miracles, and the confident attestation of them by *Gregory*, has induced many Protestants, and even some Papists also, to call in question the genuineness of these books: but the learned *Cave*, after duly weighing all the arguments, on the one side and the other, takes them to have been really written by *Gregory the Great; who indulged his*

[k] Vid. *Gregor. Magn. Dial.* l. 1. c. 2. 10. 12: l. 2. 32: l. 2. 17, 33, &c. [l] *Ibid.* l. 2. c. 7: l. 3. 9, 19, 37: l. 1. 5, 9, 10. l. 4. 15, 16, 39, 40.

credulity in them, he says, and gave more attention to fables, than he ought to have done, as all, who judge equitably and without prejudice, will easily allow [m]. But these Dialogues contain several miracles, said to have been wrought in confutation of the Arian Herefy; of which Dr. Berriman makes some use, in his elaborate defence of the Athanasian Doctrine; where speaking of the objections, which have been made against the authority of the Dialogues, he takes occasion to observe; that as far as those objections arise from the miraculousness of the things related, he sees not, why we should dispute the facts, unless it could be proved, as it certainly cannot, that miracles were then ceased [n].

Thus the miraculous powers of the Church are expressly avowed by him, to the end even of the sixth century; in which Popery had gained a full establishment: yet this Protestant Divine cannot conceive the least reason to dispute *the miraculousness of those facts* which established it; nay, defies any man to prove, *that miracles were yet ceased in this Popish age.*

In his accurate defence of that miracle of the fifth century, referred to above, amongst his other testimonies, he mentions the authority of this same *Gregory the Great*, and of his contemporary, *Isidore of Sevil*, who had too much learning and judgement, he says, *to be deceived in so important a fact [o].* And since he thinks them infallible, in reporting a fact, which happened, as he owns, near *an hundred years* before, he has much more reason, to think them so, in relating the facts of their own times: of which times however, Dr. Cave gives us the fol-

[m] Hist. Litter. V. 1. p. 543.

not. q.

[n] See Historical account of the Trinitarian Controversy Sermon. viii. p. 356.

[o] See Berriman. *ibid.* p. 330.

lowing character, under that of *Evagrius*, the principal Historian of them, of whom he says; “ that he was agreeable
 “ enough in his stile, and more accurate in the orthodoxy of
 “ his doctrines, than the other Historians, but too credulous,
 “ and much addicted to fables, as it is manifest to all, who
 “ are not blinded by their prejudices, from the stories, which
 “ he relates on every occasion, concerning *the Cross, and reliques, and forged miracles*, to be in high esteem in those
 “ days [p].” Yet neither the fabulous genius of this age: nor the incredibility of the miracles, said to have been wrought in it; nor the impertinence, the absurdity, nor the impiety, I may say, of the ends, for which they were wrought, can shock the faith of Dr. *Berriman*; or raise any suspicion of *the miraculousness of facts*, affirmed by the *infallibility* of *Pope Gregory*.

Since the zeal then of these Protestant Guides has now brought us within the very pale of the *Romish* Church, I see nothing, which can stop their progress, from the sixth age, down to the present: from *Pope Gregory, the Great, to Pope Clement*, the twelfth; the last of whom I personally knew, and believe to have been as honest and religious a Pontif, as the first. For each succeeding age will furnish miracles, and witnesses too, of as good credit as those of the sixth. The next supplies a *venerable Bede*; whose very name carries authority; and whose learning, zeal and purity of faith and manners, were celebrated through the Christian world; yet whose works are filled with miracles, which no man of sense can believe [q]. The eighth age yields a *Damascene*: whose great knowledge and erudition in all the learned sciences, no body, says *Cave*, in his senses can

[p] Hist. Litterar. Vol. I. p. 547.

Sancti Cuthbert. Op. Historic. Ed. Cantab. p. 229.

[q] Vid. Bed. de Vita & miraculis

deny: yet he was monstrously credulous, and, as the Popish writers themselves allow, abounds with lies [r]. And thus we may procede, thro' every following age, to find men of the same character; eminent for their learning, zeal and piety; yet all of them still carrying on the same frauds, down to the Perrons, the Baronius's, the Bellarmines, and the Huetius's, of these later times; whose names are full as venerable, and testimonies as credible, as any of the more ancient.

From these premises, it is evident, that the forged miracles of the fourth century, must necessarily taint the credit of all the later miracles, down even to the present age. For they depend as it were upon each other, as the parts of one uniform series, or chain, so that where-ever we draw out a link, all the rest which hang upon it, must of course fall to the ground. Let us consider then in the next place, what light the same forgeries will afford us, in looking backward also into the earlier ages, up to the times of the Apostles.

And first, when we reflect on that surprizing confidence and security, with which the principal Fathers of this fourth age have affirmed as true, what they themselves had either forged or what they knew at least to be forged; it is natural to suspect, that so bold a defiance of sacred truth could not be acquired, or become general at once, but must have been carried gradually to that height, by custom and the example of former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and superstition of the multitude would bear.

Secondly, this suspicion will be strengthened, by considering, that this age, in which Christianity was established by the ci-

[r] Cave *ibid.* p. 624.

vil power, had no real occasion for any miracles. For which reason, the learned among the Protestants have generally supposed it, to have been the very æra of their cessation: and for the same reason, the Fathers also themselves, when they were disposed to speak the truth, have not scrupled to confess, *that the miraculous gifts were then actually withdrawn, because the Church stood no longer in need of them* [s]. So that it must have been a rash, and dangerous experiment, to begin to forge miracles, at a time, when there was no particular temptation to it; if the use of such fictions had not long been tried, and the benefit of them approved and recommended by their ancestors: who wanted every help, towards supporting themselves under the pressures and persecutions, with which the powers on earth were afflicting them.

Thirdly, If we compare the principal Fathers of the fourth, with those of the earlier ages; we shall observe the same characters of zeal and piety in them all, but more learning, more judgement, and less credulity in the later Fathers. If these then be found, either to have forged miracles themselves; or to have propagated, what they knew to be forged; or to have been deluded so far by other people's forgeries, as to take them for real miracles; (of the one or the other of which, they were all unquestionably guilty) it will naturally excite in us, the same suspicion of their predecessors; who, in the same cause, and with the same zeal, were less learned, and more credulous, and in greater need of such arts for their defence and security.

Fourthly, As the personal characters of the earlier Fathers give them no advantage over their Successors; so neither does

[s] This will be particularly shewn in the course of my following argument.

the character of the earlier ages afford any real cause of preference, as to the point of their integrity, above the latter. The first indeed are generally called, and held to be *the purest*: but when they had once acquired that title, from the authority of a few leading men, it is not strange, to find it ascribed to them implicitly by every body else, without knowing or inquiring into the grounds of it. But whatever advantage of purity those first ages may claim in some particular respects, it is certain, that they were defective in some others, above all, which have since succeeded them. For there never was any period of time in all Ecclesiastical History, in which so many *rank Heresies* were publicly professed [*t*], nor in which so many *spurious books* were forged and published by the Christians, under the names of Christ, and the Apostles, and the Apostolic writers, as in those primitive ages: several of which forged books are frequently cited and applied to the defence of Christianity, by the most eminent Fathers of the same ages, as true and genuine pieces, and of equal authority, with the Scriptures themselves [*u*]. And no man surely can doubt, but that those, who would either forge, or make use of forged books, would in the same cause, and for the same ends, make use of forged miracles.

[*t*] The learned, I think, have reckoned about ninety different Hæresies, which all sprang up within the three first centuries.

[*u*] See Archbishop Wake's Preliminary Discourse to the Genuine Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers, p. 89. where he has given us a list of a great part of those spurious pieces, with a short account of each—in which he tells us, *that it would be endless to insist on all the spurious pieces, which were attributed only to St. Paul; but that the superstitious books, ascribed to St. Pe-*

ter, viz. his Acts, his Gospel, his Preaching, his Revelations, were of much greater authority even to the times of Eusebius. [§. 18, 19.] He observes also, that the book called *the Recognitions of St. Clement*, which he takes to be *the most learned, as well as the most ancient of any of those pieces, was not set forth till about the middle of the second Century?* and is rejected by Eusebius, as one of those many impostures, which were even then published under the name of that Saint. §. 28.

But the true character of these ages may best be learnt from one, who lived in the very midst of them, and was himself the chief ornament of them, I mean St. *Cyprian*, who has left us the following account of the state of the Church, just before the *Decian* persecution; about *A. D.* 250, when its discipline, as he says, was corrupted, and its faith almost lost, by the long ease and peace, which it had then enjoyed, for near forty years; during which interval, he tells us, “ that the body of
 “ Christians studied nothing, but how to increase their patri-
 “ mony: and forgetting, what the faithful had done, either
 “ in the times of the Apostles, or what they ought to do
 “ at all times, had no other passion, but an insatiable ardor, of
 “ enlarging their fortunes. That there was no true devotion
 “ in the Priests, no sound faith in the ministers: no mercy in
 “ their works, no discipline in their manners: that the men
 “ destroyed the comeliness of their beards, and women of their
 “ faces, by paint and false arts: their eyes also, so finished by
 “ the hand of God, were adulterated; and their hair stained
 “ with colors, not their own. That the simple were deluded,
 “ and the brethren circumvented by craft and fraud. That it
 “ was common, to contract marriages with unbelievers: and
 “ to prostitute the members of Christ to the Gentiles: and
 “ to swear not onely rashly, but falsely: to condemn their
 “ rulers with an insolent pride; to speak against them with
 “ spite and rancour; and to quarrel among themselves, with
 “ an obstinate hatred. That great numbers of the Bishops,
 “ who ought to be an example and lesson to the rest, contemn-
 “ ing their divine Stewardship, made themselves the stewards
 “ of secular affairs; rambling about into other people’s pro-
 “ vinces; and seeking out the markets of traffic and gain;
 “ and instead of relieving their hungry brethren in the Church,
 “ were

“ were eager onely, to heap up money ; to seize people’s lands
 “ by treachery and fraud ; and to increase their stock by exor-
 “ bitant ufury [x].”

‘This is the picture of those ages, which people affect to call the *purest*, as it was drawn from the life, by the ablest Master of the times, which he describes: and tho’ the character of the drawer must oblige us to believe, that it bore a great likeness to the original, yet it is so far from giving us any idea of purity or perfection, that if it had been drawn, even for our own times, we might justly think the coloring too coarse, and the features charged beyond the truth.

Now from all these considerations taken together it must, I think, be allowed, that the forged miracles of the fourth century give us just reason to suspect the pretensions of every other age both before and after it. My argument would be much the same, if it were grounded on the allowed forgeries of any later age. Dr. *Chapman*, who defends the miracles of the fifth century, declares *that there were some of these later instances, as public, as clear and as well attested, as any in the earlier ages; and by an evidence, equal to that, by which most of the ancient miracles are supported* [y]. Dr. *Berriman*, in his defence of a particular miracle near the end of the same century, insists, *that it cannot be discredited, without shaking the whole faith of History, and rejecting all accounts of miracles, except those of the Scriptures* [z]. And so far I agree with them both, and own their defence to be true ; that the earlier miracles rest on no better foundation, nor are supported by any better evidence, than the later. But then, if

[x] De Lapis. p. 170. Ed. Rigalt.

[z] Serm. p. 327.

[y] Miscell. Tracts, p. 170, 175.

these later, after all the confidence of their Advocates, may certainly be discredited, and must consequently be rejected; it follows from their own principles, that the earlier may, with as much reason, be rejected too. Which brings me at last to that general conclusion, which I have undertaken to illustrate; *that there is no sufficient reason to believe, from the testimony of antiquity, that any miraculous powers did ever actually subsist in any age of the Church, after the times of the Apostles.*

But this will be the proper business of the subsequent Treatise, in which, I shall endeavour to evince, by particular facts and testimonies, what this general view of the question, here given, and the reflections naturally arising from it, would previously dispose us to suspect; that the pretended miracles of the primitive Church were all mere fictions; which the pious and zealous Fathers, partly from a weak credulity, and partly, from reasons of policy; believing some perhaps to be true, and knowing all of them to be useful, were induced to espouse and propagate, for the support of a righteous cause.

I have already observed, that many spurious books were forged in the earliest times of the Church, in the Names of Christ and his Apostles, which passed upon all the Fathers, as genuine and divine through several successive ages. Now as the high authority of the Apostolic writings, and the zeal, with which they were sought for by all Churches, was the motive, without doubt, which excited some of the ablest, and most learned of the Christians, to take the pains of forging and vending such books under those false titles; so the great fame and success of the Apostolic miracles, would naturally excite some also of the most crafty, when the Apostles themselves were dead, to attempt

attempt some juggling tricks in imitation of them, and by the pretence of a divine power, to impose upon that *simplicity and credulity*, which distinguished the character of those early ages. And [a] when these artful pretenders, by insinuating themselves chiefly in private houses, or among the ignorant populace, had been able to maintain their ground through the three first centuries, the leading Clergy of the 4th, who were then established by the civil power, and at liberty to apply all arts without reserve to the conversion of the Heathens, understood their interest too well, to part with the old plea of miraculous gifts, which had been found so effectual, to dazzle the senses and possess the minds of the multitude.

This seems to have been the general state of the case in question: and though it may shock the prejudices of many, and clash with the systems, which are commonly entertained; yet it will be found, I dare say, to be true, or least the most probable; and as such, the most useful also, to the real Defence of the Christian cause. For, as far as miracles can evince the divinity of a religion, the pretensions of Christianity are confirmed by the evidence of such, as of all others on record, are the least

[a] The Primitive Christians were perpetually reproached for their gross credulity by all their enemies. *Celsus* says, that they cared neither to receive, nor to give any reason of their faith, and that it was an usual saying with them, do not examine, but believe only, and thy faith will save thee. *Julian* affirms, that the sum of all their wisdom was comprized in this single precept, believe. The Gentiles, says *Arnobius*, make it their constant business to laugh at our faith, and to lash our credulity with their facetious jokes. Orig. con. Cels. l. 1. p. 8, 9. Greg. Nazian. Inveſt. 1. Arnob. l. 2.

p. 22, 23.

The Fathers, on the other hand, defend themselves by saying, that they did nothing more on this occasion, than what the Philosophers had always done; that *Pythagoras's* precepts were inculcated by an *Ipse dixit*, and that they had found the same method useful with the vulgar, who were not at leisure to examine things; whom they taught therefore to believe, even without reasons: and that the Heathens themselves, tho' they did not confess it in words, yet practised the same in their acts. *Ibid.*

liable

liable to exception, and carry the clearest marks of their sincerity; being wrought by Christ and his Apostles, for an end so great, so important, and so universally beneficial, as to be highly worthy of the interposition of the Deity; and wrought by the ministry of mean and simple men, in the open view of the people, as the testimonial of that divine mission, to which they pretended; and delivered to us by eye-witnesses, whose honest characters exclude the suspicion of fraud, and whose knowledge of the facts, which they relate, scarce admits the probability of a mistake. This is the genuine ground on which Christianity rests; the history of our Saviour's doctrine and miracles, as it is declared and comprized within the canon of the Holy Scriptures. Whenever we go beyond this, we weaken its foundation, by endeavouring to enlarge it; and by recurring to an evidence less strong and of doubtful credit, take pains only, to render a good cause suspected, and expose it to the perpetual ridicule of the Sceptics and Freethinkers.

Should our Infidels then be disposed, to make themselves merry with the miracles of a *Symeon Stylites*, or any other crack'd-brain monk of the 4th or 5th century, there is no reason for Dr. *Chapman* to be so angry with them [b]: let us suffer them to laugh on, and even laugh with them ourselves; and by throwing out an empty tub to their sport, secure the vessel itself from their attacks. Or should the Romanists, on the

[b] This *Symeon* who acquired the name of *Stylites*, by a most extravagant whim, which he took, of spending the best part of his life on the top of a pillar, six and thirty cubits high, was a mad, enthusiastic Monk of the 5th Century, to whom many monstrous and superstitious acts are ascrib-

ed, by the Ecclesiastical writers, as the effects of a divine inspiration: all which Dr. *Chapman* most strenuously and zealously defends, against the raillery of the Author of Christianity as old as the Creation. See his *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 165. §. 111.

other hand, pretend to urge us with their miracles, and to shew the succession of them from the earliest ages, we have no reason to be moved at it, but may tell them without scruple, that we admit no miracles, but those of the Scriptures; and that all the rest are either justly suspected or certainly forged. By putting the controversy on this issue, we shall either disarm them at once, or if they persist in the dispute, may be sure to convict them of fraud and imposture: whereas by granting them but a single age of miracles, after the times of the Apostles, we shall be entangled in a series of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourselves, till we allow the same powers also to the present age.

And in truth, it has always been considered, as a fundamental principle of the Reformation, *that the Scriptures are a compleat rule both of faith and manners; and as such are clear also and intelligible, in all fundamental points, to every private Christian.* In this, all Protestant Churches agree, how much soever they may differ in any other article: and if this be true, then whatever be the characters of the antient Fathers, or whatever they may have taught, and practised in any age of the Church, is a matter wholly indifferent, and makes no part in the religion of a Protestant: and consequently, no difference of judgement with regard to those Fathers, ought to give any cause of offence or hatred among the members of that communion. For if the Scriptures are sufficient, we do not want them as guides; or if clear, as interpreters. Every one therefore may enjoy his opinion of them, with the same liberty, as of any other writers whatsoever, with this caution onely; that an esteem of them is apt to carry us too far, and has actually carried many into great and dangerous errors: whereas the neglect of them cannot be

attended with any ill consequence, since the Scriptures teach every thing, that is necessary, either to be believed or practised.

I cannot illustrate this principle so effectually, as by the following words of the excellent *Chillingworth*, who, of all men, best understood the real grounds of the controversy, between the Protestants and the Papists.

“ The Bible, I say, the Bible onely, is the religion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it, as a matter of opinions, but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they, with coherence to their own grounds, believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I, for my part, after a long, and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the *true way to eternal happiness*, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but on this rock only. I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes; Councils against Councils; some Fathers against others; the same Fathers against themselves; a consent of Fathers of one age; against the consent of Fathers of another age; the Church of one age, against the Church of another age: Traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are none to be found. No tradition, but onely of Scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved, either to have been brought in, in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age, it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty, but of Scripture onely, for any considerate man to build upon, &c.”

But

But tho' this doctrine of the sufficiency of the Scriptures be generally professed through all the reformed Churches, yet it has happened, I know not how, in our own, that it's Divines have been apt on all occasions, to join the authority of the primitive Church, to that of sacred writ; to supply doctrines from the ancient Councils, in which the Scriptures are either silent or thought defective; to add the Holy Fathers, to the College of the Apostles; and by ascribing the same gifts and powers to them both, to advance the primitive traditions, to a parity with Apostolic precepts.

Thus the late Dr. *Waterland*, who was supposed to speak the sense of our present Rulers, seldom appeals to the Scriptures in his controversial writings, without joining antiquity to them, or the authority of *the three first centuries at least*, that *golden age of Christianity*, as he calls it [c]. “ He declares, that the true interpretation of Scripture, cannot run counter, in things fundamental, to the judgement of the first and purest ages: that to depreciate the value of Ecclesiastical Antiquity, and to throw contempt on the primitive Fathers, is to wound Christianity through their sides [d]: and that Christ never sits so secure and easy on his throne, as with these faithful guards about him [e]; and he concludes his elaborate treatise on *the use and value of Antiquity*, in these words.

“ The sum of what I have been endeavouring through this whole chapter is, that Scripture and Antiquity (under the conduct of right reason) are what we ought to abide by, in settling points of doctrine. I have not put the case of Scripture

[c] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin.
p. 426.

[d] Ibid. p. 395.

[e] Ibid. 396.

“ and Antiquity interfering, or clashing with each other ; be-
 “ *cause it is a case, which will never appear in points of im-*
 “ *portance, such as this is, which we are now upon. How-*
 “ *ever, as to the general case, we may say, that those two*
 “ *ought always to go together, and to coincide with each other :*
 “ *and when they do so, they stand the firmer in their united*
 “ *strength : but if ever they clash, or appear to clash, then un-*
 “ *doubtedly there is an error somewhere, like as when two ac-*
 “ *countants vary in casting up the same sum, &c [f].”*

Here we see Antiquity joined as a necessary and inseparable companion to the Scripture, and put even upon a level with it, by this eminent Advocate of the Christian Faith. But since this seems to be a flat contradiction to the principles of the Reformation, and dangerous to the general credit and interests of the Protestant religion, it may be worth while to consider a little, from what particular motives and circumstances, so inconsistent a practice should happen to prevail more remarkably in this, than in any other Protestant Church.

Our first and principal Reformers, in the reign of *Henry* the VIIIth, had not the power to carry the Reformation so far, as they desired ; nor to make such changes in the old worship, as put them under a necessity of discarding the authority of the primitive Fathers ; but on the contrary, were obliged against their wills, to comply still with many rites and doctrines, which had no other foundation, but in that authority ; which therefore, in those circumstances, they were forced to assert and defend. For how much soever they might be disposed, to abolish

such rites, and the authority too, on which they stood, they were restrained by the will of an arbitrary Prince, who would not suffer them, to take the least step but by his immediate direction, and from his high conceit of his Theological learning, gave the law even to his Bishops, in all the religious disputes of those days; and whose chief view after all was, to banish rather the power, than the religion of the Pope, out of his realm.

In the next reign of *Edward the sixth*, tho' the same reforming Bishops found themselves at liberty, to carry on their great work to it's full perfection, yet for the sake, either of their former conduct, and prejudices; or to preserve a character of constancy; and to give the less scandal to the Clergy, who still generally favoured the old forms; they endeavoured, as far as they were able, tho' sometimes by forced and unnatural constructions, to justify all their proceedings by the example and usages of the ancient Fathers.

On the accession therefore of *Queen Mary*, and the sad catastrophe, which ensued, when the same Reformers, now doomed to be Martyrs, and especially *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, (two Fathers of the Protestant Church, as truly venerable, as Christianity perhaps has to boast of, since the times of the Apostles;) when these, I say, were brought out of their prisons, on pretence of holding public disputations, but in truth, to be exposed onely to the scoffs and contumelies of their cruel enemies; and when they had solidly evinced the truth of their doctrines, and baffled all the sophistry of their opponents, by the clear and unanswerable testimonies of the Scriptures, it grieves us after all, to see them labouring and gravelled, at a passage of *Chrysostom*, or *Ambrose*, or *Hilary*, &c; and giving their adversaries an occasion.

casion of triumph, by submitting to an authority, which was nothing to the purpose, and which in those unhappy circumstances, they were neither at liberty to reject, nor yet able to reconcile to their cause.

Queen *Elizabeth*, who next succeeded, and finally established the Reformation, affected to retain more pomp and splendor in the external part of religion, than many of her chief Divines approved; who, in compliance however with her humour, submitted to several things, which they hoped in time to get rid of [g]. Her view was, to moderate the prejudices of the Popish Clergy; and to reconcile them by degrees to the new settlement, by leaving in it an outward shew, and some resemblance of the old. From the same principle, a reverence was still kept up to Antiquity; and appeals made on both sides, to the primitive Fathers and ancient Councils, by the Professors of the new, as well as of the old doctrines: which practice has been followed ever since, by the greatest part of our leading Churchmen. But from the little success which it has had, or ever can have, in our controversies with the Papists, it is evident, that it cannot be considered in any other light, but as a vain ostentation of learning, and an impatient zeal, to repel that charge of ignorance and contempt of primitive Antiquity, with which

[g] In the Preamble of the Will of *Edw. Sandys*, Archbishop of *York*, who died *A. D.* 1588. there is the following passage relating to the rites and ceremonies of the Church, as they were then settled by public Authority.

“ I am persuaded, that such, as are
“ now set down by public Authority—are
“ no way either ungodly or unlawful, but
“ may with good conscience, for order and

“ obedience sake be used.—So I have
“ ever been persuaded, that some of them
“ be not so expedient for this Church, but
“ that they may better be disused by little
“ and little, than more and more urged.
“ As I do easily acknowledge, that our
“ Ecclesiastical polity may in some points
“ be bettered—So I do utterly dislike all
“ such rude platforms, &c.

the Protestant Churches are constantly reproached by the Romanists.

In the two following reigns, the Popish interest began to raise it's head again in *England*. *James* the First was a mere School-Divine, fond of theological disputes; and tho' he wrote against the Papists, yet *being afraid of them*, as Bishop *Burnet* says, *always acted for them* [b]. And *Charles the First's* Queen, who was a zealot to that religion, used all her power with the King, which was very great, to support and propagate it's credit in the Kingdom, and to suspend the rigor of the laws against it. "By the King's connivence, says the learned Dr. *Heylin*, and the Queen's indulgence, the Popish faction gathered not onely strength, but confidence; multiplying in some numbers about the Court, and resorting in a more open manner to the Masses at *Somerſet* House; where the *Capuchins* had obtained a Chappel and Convent [i]." The leading Churchmen also, from a compliance with the principles of the Court, and an abhorrence of those of the Puritans, seemed to have formed that senseless project of a reconciliation with *Rome*, and made considerable advances towards it, by giving such an interpretation to the doctrines and form to the discipline of our Church, as might invite all moderate Papists, to join with them in it's communion. But this compliance had no other effect, nor ever can have, than to weaken the Protestant cause, and to furnish it's enemies with the greater power and means to oppress it. Nor did they fail to make their full advantage of it; by representing it, "as a proof of the fickle and unsettled state

[b] See Bishop *Burnet's* History of his Times, Vol. I. p. 11, 12.

[i] See Life of Archbishop *Leaud* by Dr. *Pat. Heylin*, Par. 2. l. iv. p. 337.

“ of the *English* Church, that it was grown sick, as it were,
 “ and weary of itself, and could find no rest in the novelties,
 “ which it had embraced, but was returning apace to it's old
 “ principles, and resuming many of the rites and doctrines, for
 “ which it had forsaken the Church of *Rome*.” All this was
 urged with great force against our *Chillingworth*, by that subtil
 Jesuit, Mr. *Knot*; and exemplified by him in many particulars,
 which the learned Dr. *Heylin*, who was perfectly acquainted
 with the ecclesiastical principles of that age, and a strenuous
 espouser of them, declares to be true, in the following words,
 drawn from his *Life of Archbishop Laud*.

“ If you will take the character of the Church of *England*,
 “ says he, from the pen of a Jesuit, you shall find him speak-
 “ ing, among other falsehoods, these undoubted truths; *viz.* that
 “ the Professors of it, they especially of greatest worth, learn-
 “ ing, and authority, love temper and moderation; that the
 “ doctrines are altered in many Things; as for example, The
 “ Pope not Antichrist; Pictures, free-will, predestination,
 “ universal grace, inherent righteousness; the preferring of
 “ charity before knowledge; the merit, or reward rather of
 “ good works; the thirty nine articles seeming patient, if not
 “ ambitious also of some catholic sense; that their Churches
 “ begin to look with a new face; their walls to speak a new
 “ language; and some of their Divines to teach, that the
 “ Church hath authority in determining controversies of faith,
 “ and interpreting the Scriptures; that men, in talk and writ-
 “ ing, use willingly the once fearful names of Priests and Al-
 “ tars, and are now put in mind, that for the exposition of
 “ Scripture, they are by Canon bound to follow the Fathers.—So
 far

“ far the Jesuit, says he, may be thought to speak nothing but
 “ truth [k].”

It is needless to descend to the later reigns; or to observe, how far the discipline and principles of *Archbishop Laud* were adopted again at the Restoration; or what credit they still obtain with some of the principal Clergy of our own times; since this can hardly escape the notice of all, who pay any attention to Ecclesiastical affairs. But there is another circumstance, that I must not omit to mention, as it is peculiar to our Church, and from *Queen Elizabeth's* time down to our own, has had no small influence on it's principles and practice, and which will always keep up amongst us a full respect to Ecclesiastical antiquity. I mean those unhappy dissensions among the Protestants of this nation, which have split them into different sects and separate communions. For in these disputes, which wholly turn on points of discipline, and external forms of worship, as the authority of the Fathers, whatever weight it ought to have is mostly on the side of the established Church, so the Church will always be disposed to support that authority, which helps it to depress a set of men, who, though agreeing with it in essentials, and dissenting only about things indifferent, are yet more odious, than the Papists themselves, to all the zealous advocates, and warm admirers of the primitive Fathers.

These seem to have been the chief reasons, which from the time even of our reformation, have advanced the credit of Ec-

[k] See Ibid. p. 238. and the Life also, of Mr. *Chillingworth* by Monsieur Des Maizeaux, p. 113. Not. (AA.)

clesiastical antiquity to an higher pitch in this kingdom, than in any other Protestant country. Which same principles, by the encouragement which they have generally received from our Governors are now carried, as we have seen, to an heighth, that must needs alarm all serious Protestants, as they have no other tendency, nor can have any other effect, but to throw us again into the arms of the Romish Church. For I have long been of opinion, that the success, which their Missionaries have ever found in this Island, and which of late has been more particularly complained of, is chiefly owing, to those high notions of the primitive discipline, and that great reverence for the ancient Fathers, which are entertained and propagated by a great part of our Clergy. For by agreeing with the Romanists thus far, and joining with them in a common appeal to primitive antiquity, we allow all, which they can fairly draw from it, to be sound and orthodox; and though in the end, they may not perhaps gain every thing, which they aim at, yet they will be sure always, to come off with great advantage.

Mr. *Chillingworth* himself is a memorable example of this truth: who, in his account of the several motives, which induced him to embrace the *Romish* faith, mentions the two following;

“ Because, if any credit may be given to as creditable
 “ records, as any are extant, the doctrine of Catholics hath
 “ been frequently confirmed, and the opposite doctrine of
 “ Protestants confounded, with supernatural and divine mi-
 “ racles.

“ Because the doctrine of the church of *Rome* is conformable,
 “ and the doctrine of Protestants contrary, to the doctrine of
 “ the Fathers, even by the confession of Protestants themselves :
 “ I mean those Fathers, who lived within the compass of the
 “ first six hundred years ; to whom Protestants do very fre-
 “ quently and very confidently appeal [1].”

These seem to have been the principal arguments, which abused this great man, as he expresses it, and hurried him into the Church of *Rome*. *Silly Sophisms*, as he afterwards calls them, grounded on mistakes and false suppositions, which he unadvisedly took for granted [m]. Till upon a clear view of the errors, into which they had drawn him, he perceived, that the means could not be pure, when the end was so corrupt, and found no other way of retrieving his mistake, and becoming Protestant again, but by discarding those fallacious records, and fictitious miracles, which had seduced him, and committing himself to the sole guidance, and infallible authority of the holy Scriptures. On this foundation, he has built the most solid and rational defence of the Protestant cause, which has ever been offered to the public since the Reformation. Yet our Champions of these days are employing all their skill, to demolish what he had built, and to adopt again into the system of our faith, all that he had thrown out of it ; all the nonsense, the superstition, and the pious frauds of the primitive ages ; nor will they allow us even to be Christians, but on those very principles, which must finally make us Papists.

[1] See Pref. to *Charity maintained*, Edition.
 §. 43. in *Hillingworth's Works*, seventh [m] See *ibid.* §. 42.

The design of the present treatise, is to give some check to the current of this zeal, and to fix the religion of Protestants on its proper basis, that is, on the sacred Scriptures; not on the authority of weak and fallible men, the detection of whose errors, and the suspicion of whose frauds would necessarily give a wound to Christianity itself; which yet in reality, is no more concerned or affected by the characters of the antient, than of the modern Fathers of the Church. But to declare my opinion in short on the real value of those primitive writers, I freely own them to be of some use and service on several accounts.

1st, In attesting and transmitting to us the genuin books of the holy Scriptures. Yet this is not owing to any particular sanctity or sagacity of those antient times, but to the notoriety of the thing, and the authority with which the books themselves were received from their first publication, in all Churches: whence they have since been handed down to us, in the same manner, as the works of all other antient writers, by the perpetual tradition of successive ages, whether pure or corrupt, learned or unlearned.

2dly, Their more immediate and proper use, is, to teach us the doctrines, the rites, the manners, and the learning of the several ages, in which they lived: yet as witnesses only, not as guides: as declaring, what was then believed, not what was true; what was practised, not what ought to be practised: since their works abound with instances of foolish, false and dangerous opinions, universally maintained and zealously propagated by them all.

Lastly,

Lastly, Their very errors also afford an use and profitable lesson to us: for the many corruptions, which crept into the Church in those very early ages, are a standing proof and admonition to all the later ages, that there is no way of preserving a purity of faith and worship in any Church, but by reviewing them from time to time, and reducing them to the original test and standard of the holy Scriptures.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AFTER I had finished this Introductory treatise, and was preparing to send it to the press, I happened to meet with an Archidiaconal charge, delivered to the Clergy at a visitation, by the same learned Dr. *Chapman*, whom I have had frequent occasion to mention, in the course of my argument. And since this charge is of a singular kind, and bears some relation to the subject of the present inquiry, with regard both to *Popery* and *Primitive Antiquity*, the reader, I hope, will excuse me, if I detain him here a while, with a few short remarks upon it.

The Archdeacon enters directly into the matter of his speech; and instead of congratulating with his reverend brethren, on their deliverance from the *late rebellion*, drops but a slight hint on that, as the prelude onely to *another plot*, of a more dreadful and fatal kind which he is in hast to communicate; the last effort of *subtil Jesuits*, who seeing every other method baffled and ineffectual, resolved to try a new, though bold expedient for their Church; more big, he says, with pest and confusion, than all the former devices of their party against us; striking decisively at the very root of the Reformation, and at the basis of all protestant Churches; and secretly working, at this very time, incredible mischief against our whole religion [a] Then as to the Leader in this Plot, he describes him like another *Catiline*; furnished with every great talent, proper for the purpose; an head acute and prolific; learning extensive and various; language dogmatical and lively; a zeal never destitute of address,

[a] See page 1, 2, 3.

and length of days, attending constant studies and vivacity of genius : in short, with every art, to draw every creature ; Papist and Protestant ; zealot and freethinker, into his scheme [b].

After such an exordium, one cannot help figuring to himself what a surprize, so strange a piece of news must needs excite in this reverend Assembly, to find themselves exposed again so unexpectedly, to the effects of so direful a conspiracy ; and what an impatience it would create, to hear the rest, and to learn, by what arts and instruments, this calamity was to be brought upon them ; which the Archdeacon proceeds to disclose in the following manner :

That there were certain Loyolites in France, who had assumed of a sudden a new character, and blazed out most fastidious Hypercritics : that these had entered into a vow, to deprive us of all our learning and religion at once, and by one desperate furious push, to stab the protestant cause to the heart, with the admired spirit of incredulity and freethinking : that their method of doing it was ; to make all the world believe, that the ancient writers of Greece and Rome, were either figments, or worthless triflers ; and by that means, to confound and dissipate all our notions in Chronology, History, Laws, usages, doctrines ecclesiastical and prophane, together with the genius and vitals of all the dead languages : that, in the execution of this design, they had already gone so far, as to reproach Thucydides and Xenophon very tartly, with modern Gallicisms and suspicious phraseologies ; and had superciliously lashed all the rest ; Diodorus, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Livy, Justin, Suetonius, Quintilian, Tacitus, Plutarch, Athenæus, Dion

[b] Page 11, 12, 18, &c.

Cassius, with multitudes of others, as mere counterfeit Romances; the works of recent Sophists, Impostors, and Fabulators [c].

And lest any one should interrupt him here, and ask; how the protestant cause could be ruined and our whole religion overturned, by the loss onely of these Pagan writers, he clears up that doubt in the following words, by declaring; that this blow, how daring soever, was but the introduction to the fatal stroke, which was to insue; for that the Clements, the Chrysostoms, the Jeroms, and the Austins, were to fall the next in this massacre; and the ancient Councils themselves, both general and provincial, would not long survive them [d].

This is the substance of his plot, as it is set forth by himself. For if we could penetrate the very marrow, as he says, or, in a metaphor still more elegant, the very vitals of the dead languages themselves, we could not find any words, so well suited to his subject, or so adapted, to spread wonder and amazement thro' an Assembly, as his own. As to the success of the plot, he represents it every where, as most easy and probable. For the Papists would favour it of course, as it could not fail of reducing all Christendom under the absolute power of Rome; and the Protestants, among whom a fantastical passion for novelties, and a brisk giddy spirit of Pyrrhonism was rising very fast [e], would rejoice at any blow given to ecclesiastical history and the Scriptures, and readily give up even their favourite Virgils and Horaces, &c. on condition only, that the Jeroms might be sacrificed at the same time [f].

[c] See pag. 3, 4, 5.

[d] Page 6.

[e] Page 12.

[f] Page 22, 23.

Now whatever surprize the first opening of this speech might give, either to the hearer or reader, the conclusion, I dare say, will give as great, to find *this crafty projection*, as he calls it, which he has been dressing up with such solemnity and laboured pomp of words, as a most desperate plot of the Romish Church, to be nothing at last but the stale and senseless whim of a single old Jesuit, formed by no concert or confederacy with any set of men in the world, and published about forty years ago without any other effect whatsoever, than of being laughed at ever since by all men of sense, and particularly condemned at *Rome*, as I have been certainly informed, as the mere delirium of a doting Critic.

One would not easily conceive, at the first thought, what should put it into this Archdeacon's head, to think of alarming the Provincial Clergy, at this time of day, with the vain terrors of such an exploded and obsolete tale. But this scheme was artfully laid, and the time exactly hit by him. He saw, that a *Panic* was spread over the land; that people's heads were filled with nothing, but conspiracies and Popish invasions; that this was the moment, to make a figure with his plot, and if the discovery was postponed, the merit of it would be lost. *He struck in roundly* therefore, as he expresses it, *and like a true man of craft, with this taste and turn of the age* [g]; and snatched the opportunity of displaying his abilities before his reverend brethren, and while he was rousing all their fears, of administering comfort to them at the same time, by shewing; what a champion they had got to defend them; that the old Jesuit himself could not outdo him, in those very talents of his, which he had been enumerating; *the acuteness of his prolific head; the extent of*

[g] See page 12.

his various learning ; the force of his dogmatical language : and that the Freethinkers were nothing to him, even in their own arts, and the management of those everlasting arms of theirs, in which their strength lay ; the alertness of their sneers ; their affectation of appearing significant in erudition, and their fluent pompous shew of some depth in letters [b].

But surely, no *Archidiaconal Charge* was ever more learnedly trifling, or pompously absurd than this. He confesses, that this conceit of the Jesuit raised so general an outcry against it, among the *Papists themselves*, that he was obliged to recant it, as soon almost as it was divulged ; that his own Society of the Jesuits published a formal protestation against it [i] ; and that the learned of all the other Orders both in France and Italy, sharply declared their abhorrence of it [k]. Yet this despicable project of a cloistered visionary, conceived so many years ago, retracted by himself, censured by his own Order, and abhorred by all the other Orders of France and Italy, is here puffed and dressed out by our Archdeacon, in an Assembly of English Clergy, as a most dreadful plot, spreading it's infection far and wide, threatening ruin to our whole religion, *fire and sword to all Protestants [l].*

In opening the evidences of this plot, he declares from his own knowledge, *that it was certainly begun, and is carried on to this day, with art and success ; and is assisted also by a favourable concurrence of circumstances in this very age [m] : that one great man in France had loudly proclaimed a very high esteem for the author : that another person at Amsterdam had the confidence to suppose gravely,*

[b] See page 22, 23.

[i] (Note †).

[k] Pag. 20.

[l] Pag. *ibid.*

[m] See page. xi.

even in print, that the Jesuit's new system would bear a debate among the learned, and by degrees gain a strong, if not the ablest party to it's side [n]: and if any farther proof be required, he assures us, that though it may justly seem so extravagant and chimerical, as to make some good men believe it incapable of doing any mischief, yet he can prove, on the contrary, that it has already spread a taint too far: among some, for catholic advantages, among others, for want of knowing that secret, or from passionate biasses to their coins, or to favour their Pyrrhonism [o].

The reader will be apt to wonder here again, why our Archdeacon is not more explicit and particular in declaring his proofs, in a cause, which, of all others, seems to want them the most. *He knows, that the plot is carried on with success to this day; and can prove, he says, that it has spread a taint too far: yet after he has prepared us, to expect the history and progress of the infection, and what particular persons it has tainted in this and that nation; he drops all that at once, as if there were some latent sore in it, too tender for him to touch. But it is not very difficult to guess at the reason: it is his great regard for certain good friends of his whom he is loth to impeach, as accomplices in this Jesuitical plot, which yet he must necessarily do, whenever he is forced to speak out; I mean the Tunstalls and the Marklands of our own country: who, with that same malignant spirit against the ancients, of which he talks [p], have been lately making the same desperate furious push, in this very protestant land, to deprive us of the works of Cicero, by adding them to the Jesuit's list of counterfeit romances, and shewing them to be the fragments of those same busy Sophists and recent Fabu-*

[n] Pag. 19.

[p] Page 17. Note [+].

[o] Pag. xi. 20.

lators. For of all the learned in this kingdom, there are none, who, like the *Loyolites of France*, have ventured, *to assume that new character, of blazing and fastidious Hypercritics*, or have pushed *their protestant Pyrrhonism* so far, as they.

Yet after all, which I have been saying of the Archdeacon's Speech, I must do him the justice to own, that there are many observations occasionally interspersed in it, both exceedingly curious, and intirely new. I shall just give one of them, as a specimen of the rest; by which he informs his reverend brethren, *that the real necessities of learned authors, in these times of ours, are extremely great; nay almost infinitely so, beyond any thing, which the multitude can imagine [q.]* This is a discovery so recondite, and remote from vulgar apprehension, that it could not possibly be made by any, but himself. For, though his modesty would fain conceal it, he is but drawing his own picture, under the character, which he gives of *those great lights and pillars, of Protestantism, whom he proposes to the Clergy as patterns of their studies: men, who spent their whole lives in the pursuit of erudition, penetrated the very marrow of all the learned languages, traversed, with the same zeal, every ancient, and monument they could find, had all antiquity before them in one grand comprehensive view, and attained to that abounding richness in learning which rendered them the glories of their age, and a scourge and terror to any bold superficial pretenders, who should offer to impose upon the public any mischievous sophistries or chicanery of science [r].* For, how could any man know, the real necessities of such *deep scholars*, as these, if he himself was not as profound, as they? or how indeed can any one elicit, reach even the sense of so deep a discovery; for as to those *bold and superficial pretenders*, whom he justly derides, for skimming onely

[q] See pag. 26.

[r] Pag. 27, 28.

the surface of literature, *and contenting themselves, as he tells us, with a few select authors, the most eminent, and elegant in each class* [s]; they would be apt to pronounce at once, that there is no sense at all in it.

But, if I may presume to offer my opinion, the sense of it, I think, will be found clear and good by a due attention to the context; in which the Archdeacon, having first taken occasion to declare, *that our Church is far inferior to the Romish in the provision of emoluments for the clergy*, artfully introduces his observation, by way of complaint, or petition, as it were, to the public, on behalf of himself, and all the other learned authors, among the Clergy, that, whereas their learning, in these protestant days, is infinitely superior, to what it was in the Popish, yet our Governors do not consider, that *their real necessities* are increased to them likewise, in the same proportion. For though he has not given any reasons, to confirm this, yet the truth of it may be demonstrated by a known and memorable fact. For instance; *Eraſmus*, an *Author*, competently learned, for those Popish times, was supplied with all *real necessities*, and a large overplus besides, from one single benefice, conferred upon him by an *Archbishop of Canterbury*: Our Archdeacon, on the contrary, in these protestant times, holds the same benefice, which *Eraſmus* then held, with a second still better, and the profits of an Archdeaconry into the bargain, yet out of *the infinite superiority of his learning*, wants the addition still of more preferment, *to supply his infinite want of real necessities*.

But I am drawn insensibly too far, and wasting too much time in pointing out the solemn trifles, and elaborate nonsense of this

strange speech. My chief purpose, in taking notice of it, was of a more serious kind; to shew, by the example of this very performance, to what poor shifts this *Defender of the primitive monks, and their miracles*, will naturally be reduced, whenever he finds it expedient, to give a public testimony of his zeal against *Rome*; and while he pretends to be fighting against Popery, how he will be driven, by the force of his principles, to make but a mock-fight of it, a mere theatrical shew, and to combat onely phantasms of his own dressing up.

This, I say, is the necessary consequence of his principles; of *that superstitious veneration of the primitive Fathers, and that implicit faith in Ecclesiastical History*, which it has been the business of his life and studies, to inculcate. For I have already shewn, by facts and instances produced in this Introductory treatise, how those Divines of our Church, who carry the authority of the Fathers so high, as to make them *the guides and interpreters of our religion*, and who *appeal to them especially in our controversies with the Papists*, preclude themselves of course, from attacking any of those principal corruptions, for the sake of which, the Protestants found it necessary, to separate themselves from the communion of *Rome*. Yet our Archdeacon maintains still, as we have seen, in this speech, that the Ancient Fathers and Primitive Councils, the *Clements*, the *Chrysostoms*, the *Jeroms*, and the *Austins*, are the very bulwarks of Protestantism, and the instruments, through which *we may most glaringly expose to every common eye, the unscriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romish Church* [1].

Now, as in all disputes, the readiest way to find out the

[1] See pag. 2, &c.

truth, is, by reducing them, as far as it is possible, to questions of fact, and to the trial of our senses, so in this, I shall refer myself to a fact, which I have endeavoured to exemplify in the foregoing work, with regard to those very Fathers, to whom the Archdeacon appeals; and particularly, to *Chrysostom, Jerom and Austin*; concerning whom, I have there affirmed, and do now again affirm, *that they have all severally taught, and practised, and warmly recommended to the practice of all Christians, certain rites and doctrines, which, upon their authority, and example, are received and practised at this day by the Romish Church, but condemned and rejected by Protestant Churches, as unscriptural, superstitious and idolatrous.* If the Archdeacon allows this fact, every one will see at once, without asking his opinion any farther, on which side those Fathers are to be ranged: if he denies it, he must deny at the same time, that those passages, which I have produced in proof of it, are really to be found in them; or otherwise, in spite of any distinction or comment, which he can frame upon them, every man of sense will allow the fact to be true.

But of all the primitive Fathers, *Jerom* seems to be the peculiar favorite of our Archdeacon, and, as we may collect from this very speech, is supposed by him, to be of more eminent service to us than any of them, both against the *Papists* and the *Freethinkers*: for which reason, I have chosen to employ the few pages, that remain, in considering his particular merit and principles a little more precisely: and with that view, shall propose another fact or two, drawn from his writings; which will enable the reader to form a clear judgement of his character, as far as it relates to the point, now in dispute, between the Archdeacon and myself.

This *Jerom* then, as I have observed in the foregoing work, was a most zealous admirer and promotor of the *monkish life*; and, for the sake of advancing it's credit in the world, wrote the lives of two celebrated Monks; the one called *Paul*, and the other *Hilarion*; in which, after he has invoked *that same Holy spirit, which inspired the said Monks, to inspire him also with language, equal to the wonderful acts, which he was going to relate*, he has inserted a number of tales, and miracles, so grossly fabulous, as not to admit the least doubt, of their being absolute forgeries. The *Life of Paul* was published the first, and, as we learn from *Jerom* himself, was treated, as a *mere fable*, by the Freethinkers, or *Scyllæan dogs*, as he calls them, of those days [u]. Nor is it considered at this day in any other character, or mentioned by the learned on any other account, than as a proof, of *that passion for fiction and imposture, which possessed the Fathers of the 4th century* [x]. Now whether *Jerom* forged these tales himself, or propagated what he knew to be forged by others, or whether he really believed them, and published onely, what he took to be true; our Archdeacon may chuse which he pleases, I shall not dispute it with him, since the fact, which I would lay before the reader, and with which alone, we are at present concerned, is uncontestable, *that it was one of the principal views of Jerom's zeal and writings, to recommend to all Christians, as the perfection of the Christian life, a species of monkery, not onely abhorred by Protestants, but,*

[u] Unde & nos—cæptum ab eo opus aggredientes, maledicorum voces contemnimus: qui olim detrahentes *Paulo meo*, nunc forte detrahent *Hilarioni*——verum destinato operi imponam manum & *Scyllæos canes* obturata aure transibo. Pro-

log. in vit. S. Hilarion. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 74.

[x] Quam fuerint quarti seculi Scriptores fabulis dediti, e vita *Pauli Hieronymi ana*, ex *Athanasiana Antonii*, &c. intelligimus. *Dodw. Dissert. in Irenæum* 2. §. l.v.

in my opinion,, more contemptible and superstitious, than any that is professed at this day in the Church of *Rome*.

Again, *Jerom*, as I have intimated also above, wrote a little piece or two against *Vigilantius*, in which he treats him, as a most blasphemous Heretic, and gives us all the particular articles of his hæresy, drawn from *Vigilantius's* own words, to the following effect.

“ That the honors paid to the rotten bones and dust of the
“ saints and martyrs, by adoring, kissing, wrapping them up
“ in silk and vessels of gold, lodging them in their Churches and
“ lighting up wax candles before them, after the manner of the
“ Heathens, were the insigns of Idolatry [*y*].

“ That the Cœlibacy of the Clergy was an Hæresy, and their
“ vows of chastity the seminary of lewdness [*z*].

“ That to pray for the dead, or to desire the prayers of the
“ dead, was superstitious: and that the Souls of the departed
“ Saints and Martyrs were at rest, in some particular place,
“ whence they could not remove themselves at pleasure, so
“ as to be present every where to the prayers of their vota-
“ ries [*a*].

[*y*] Ais *Vigilantium*——os foetidum p. 281.
rursus aperire, & putorem spurcissimum
contra Sanctorum Martyrum proferre reliquias, & nos, qui eas suscipimus, appellare cinerarios & idolatras, qui mortuorum hominum Ossa veneramur, &c. Vide Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 278, 279. 282, &c.

[*z*] Dicit——continentiam, hæresim; pudicitiam, libidinis seminarium. ibid. &c. ibid p. 283, &c.

[*a*] Ais enim vel in sinu Abrahamæ, vel in loco refrigerii, vel subter aram Dei animas Apostolorum & Martyrum confedisse, nec posse de suis tumultis, & ubi voluerint, adeisse præsentibus——dis in libello tuo, quod dum vivimus, mutuo pro nobis orare possumus; postquam autem mortui fuerimus, nullius sit pro alio ex audienda oratio, &c. ibid p. 283, &c.

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“ That the Sepulchres of the Martyrs ought not to be worshipped, nor their fasts and vigils to be observed [b].

“ That the signs and wonders, said to be wrought by their reliques, and at their Sepulchres, served to no good end or purpose of religion [c].”

These were the sacrilegious tenets, as Jerom calls them, which he could not bear with patience, or without the utmost grief [d]; and for which he declares *Vigilantius* to be a most detestable heretic, venting his foul-mouthed blasphemies against the reliques of the Martyrs, which were working daily signs and wonders. He bids him, go into the Churches of those Martyrs, and he would be cleansed from the evil spirit, which possessed him, and feel himself burnt, not by those wax candles, which so much offended him, but by invisible flames, which would force that *Dæmon* who talked within him, to confess himself to be the same, who had personated a Mercury, perhaps, or a Bacchus, or some other of their Gods among the Heathens [e]. At which wild rate, this good Father raves on, through several pages, in a strain much more furious, than the most bigotted Papist would use at this day, in the defence of the same rites.

Let our Archdeacon then speak directly to this fact, and tell us, which of these two is acting here the Protestant part, and serving the Protestant cause: whether it be *Jerom* or *Vigilantius*: whether the *Primitive Father*, who, by lies and forgeries, so

[b] Qui Martyrum neget sepulcra veneranda, damnandas dicit esse vigilias—ibid. 281.

[c] Argumentatur contra signa & virtutes, quæ in Basilicis Martyrum sunt, p. 285.

[d] Fatebor tibi dolorem meum. Sacriligium tantum, patienter audire non possum,

p. 280.

[e] Ingredere basilicas Martyrum, & aliquando purgaberis: invenies ibi multos socios tuos, & nequaquam cereis Martyrum, qui tibi displicent, sed flammis invisibilibus combureris—&c. p. 286.

fiercely maintains the honor of *monkery* and *reliques*; or the *Primitive Heretic*, who, by the Principles of reason and the Gospel, so firmly rejects them.

But he has told us already in his speech, that the *Jeroms* are the men, who must enable us, to expose *the unprimitive crudities of the Romish principles and practices*: and he will try again, perhaps on this occasion, what he has tried with success on others, to accommodate these very facts to his own system: and by an art, which he has learnt from *Jerom* himself, will teach us, “ that we ought to distinguish between *the dogmatical and the agonistical stile*; that in the first, indeed, truth is the object aimed at, but in the second, nothing but victory; that sincerity therefore is necessary in the one, but art onely in the other: that *Jerom* was not here dogmatizing, but fighting with an enemy; and in that case, according to his custom, not saying what he thought true, but what was necessary to his cause, and catching up any words, to throw at him, which would best serve, to knock him down: then he will cry out again, in the same lamentable stile, *that this is not the first time, that poor St. Jerom has been thus mangled and misrepresented* [f]; that I have suppressed the very expressions, which would have cleared up the matter and justified the purity of his principles; for when *Vigilantius* charges him with Idolatry, for worshipping rotten bones, in the manner above-mentioned, that I had omitted to acquaint the reader, how *Jerom* denies the charge, and declares, *that they paid no divine worship to any thing but to God, that by honoring the re-*

[f] Honoramus autem reliquias Martyrum, ut eum, cujus sunt Martyres, adoremus. Honoramus servos, ut honor ser-

vorum redundet ad Dominum; qui ait; qui vos suscipit, me suscipit. Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 279.

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“ *liques of the Martyrs, they meant to adore him, whose Martyrs they were; and gave honor to the servants, that the honor of the servants might redound to their Lord, who says, be that receiveth you receiveth me [g].*” And what is this after all, but the same trifling and evasive distinction, with which the *Romanists* defend the same practices at this day, and shift off that charge of Idolatry, which is urged against them by the Heretical Protestants?

But to pursue this point a little farther. There is another short passage, in the same work of *Jerom*, where he urges *Vigilantius*, in the following manner: “ That if it were such a sacrilege, or impiety, as *Vigilantius* contends, to pay those honors to the reliques of the Saints; then *the Emperor Constantius* must needs be a sacrilegious person, who translated the *holy reliques of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy, to Constantinople*: then *Arcadius Augustus* also must be held sacrilegious, who translated the bones of *the blessed Samuel* from *Judæa*, where they had lain so many ages, into *Thrace*: then all the Bishops likewise were not onely sacrilegious, but stupid too, who submitted to carry a thing, the most contemptible, and nothing but mere dust, in silk and vessels of gold: and lastly, then the people of all the Churches must needs be fools, who went out to meet those holy reliques, and received them, with as much joy, as if they had seen the Prophet himself, living, and present among them: for the procession was attended by swarms of people, from *Palæstine*, even unto *Chalcedon*, singing with one voice the praises of Christ, who were yet adoring *Samuel* perhaps, and not Christ, whose Prophet and Levite *Samuel* was [b].”

Now

[g] See Dr. Chapman's defence of *Jerom*—in *Miscellan. Tracts*. pag. 30, &c.

[b] Ergo—*Sacrilegus fuit Constantius Imperator, &c. ibid.* p. 282, 3.

Now let the Archdeacon declare once more, what it is, that we must say and think, *of these translations and processions of holy reliques*, which were solemnized, as *Jerom* here describes them, with such pomp and pageantry of devotion, by the Emperors, Bishops, people, and all Christian Churches of those Primitive times. Must we with *Vigilantius*, call them acts of impiety, superstition and stupidity; or with *Jerom*, treat such an opinion as blasphemous and heretical? but whatever answer he may give, we may venture to affirm, without waiting for it, what is sufficient for my purpose, and notorious to all, who have heard or seen, what passes in the *Church of Rome*, that *Jerom's* account of *those primitive reliques and their translations*, is the very form, and pattern, by which the *Romanists* translate, receive and venerate their holy reliques at this day.

I have now said enough, for the present occasion, concerning the use of the Fathers, and particularly of *Jerom*, with regard to our controversies with the Papists, yet cannot put an end to this Postscript, without adding a word or two, on what the Archdeacon has farther intimated, with respect to the same *Jerom*, and another sort of enemies the *Freethinkers*; who make him likewise, as he would persuade us, the particular object of their spleen, and would be glad, as well as the Papists, to get rid of him at any rate. Now if this had been said of the *Freethinkers* onely, in popish countries, there would have been some sense in it; but as it is here applied, there is certainly none at all. For in the *Romish Church*, there are many without doubt, who from a freedom of thinking, superior to that of the vulgar, must needs condemn the whole system of their monkery, their worship of Saints and reliques, their holy water, holy oil, crosses, masses, exorcisms, and all their other superstitions;

mani-

manifestly contrived, to serve purposes merely secular ; to support the power, and increase the wealth of the Clergy : and it is natural to imagine, that men, whose scepticism turned chiefly on those rites and practices, might be particularly galled, by the writings of *Jerom*, or the other Fathers, by whose authority, they were all at first propagated, and are still maintained, and forcibly imposed upon them. But the case is widely different in Protestant countries ; where we are neither teized with such fopperies, nor tied down to the authority of the Fathers ; and where the Freethinkers consequently have no reason, to fancy themselves specially hurt by any of them ; but on the contrary, many obvious reasons, why they should enjoy and rejoice in them all ; as affording infinite matter for the sport of sceptical wits ; in the credulity, the superstition, the pious frauds, and forged miracles of those primitive times : all which, they have never failed to set forth, as the genuin characters of the Christian Priesthood, and Christian Churches of all ages ; and to play them off with all their art, so as to make them bear against religion itself ; and they bear indeed in the strongest manner against the religion of *Rome*, as being wholly founded, and still supported by those very arts. But the Protestants stand clear, and unconcerned in the dispute ; and have nothing to do, but to look on, and divert themselves with the issue of it. For their religion rests on quite another foot, on the single, but solid foundation of the sacred Scriptures ; unmixed with rubbish of antient tradition, or antient Fathers ; and independent on the characters and writings of any men whatsoever, except of Moses and the Prophets ; Christ and the Apostles. But when Protestant Divines, urged on by an unhappy zeal, or the vanity of displaying their superior learning, think fit, to take up the quarrel, as their own ; and when

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Archdeacons especially, and *Lambeth Chaplains*, come forth, with a sort of oracular authority, to defend those primitive frauds and forgeries, and declare the cause of the Fathers, to be the common cause of all Christians ; then the affair indeed becomes serious ; for this adds a real force and sting to the railleries of the Sceptics ; turns their slight cavils, into grave objections, and points them directly against Protestantism itself.



A N

I N Q U I R Y

Into the MIRACULOUS POWERS, &c.

INOW procede, according to my promise, to a more precise and accurate Discussion of the argument of the *Introductory Discourse*, and to open all the particular proofs, which induced me finally to embrace it, with that freedom and impartiality, which becomes every ingenuous and disinterested inquirer after truth: and, that I may lay the whole question before the reader in the clearest light, I propose to observe the following method.

I. To draw out, in their proper order, all the principal testimonies, which relate to the miraculous gifts of the Church, as they are found in the writings of the Fathers from the earliest ages, after the days of the Apostles. Whence we shall see, at one view, the whole evidence, by which they have hitherto been supported.

II. To throw together all, which those Fathers also have delivered, concerning the condition of the persons who are said to have been indued with those gifts, and to have wrought the miracles, to which they appeal.

III. To illustrate the particular characters and opinions of the Fathers, who attest those miracles; so as to enable us to determine with more exactness, what degree of credit may be due to their testimony.

IV. To review all the several kinds of miracles, which are pretended to have been wrought, and to observe, from the nature of each, how far the credibility of them may reasonably be suspected.

V. To refute some of the most plausible objections, which have hitherto been made by my antagonists, or which the prejudices and prepossessions of many pious Christians may be apt to suggest to the general turn of my argument.

I. In collecting all the facts and testimonies, which relate to the present argument, from the earliest antiquity, after the days of the Apostles, our first thoughts are carried of course to the *Apostolic* Fathers, that is, to those, who had lived and conversed with the Apostles, and who, by their special appointment, were ordained to succeed them in the Government of the Church. For as there are several of this character, whose writings still remain to us, *St. Barnabas*, *St. Clement*, *St. Ignatius*, *St. Polycarp*, *St. Hermas*, so it is natural to expect, that, in these valued remains, the History of the miraculous gifts, which are so much celebrated by the writers of the New Testament, should be carried on still in the same manner by these their immediate successors, through the next generation. For if any such gifts had been actually subsisting in their days, it is highly probable, that men of their eminent zeal and piety, who had seen the wonderful effects of them, under the manage-
ment

ment of the Apostles, and must themselves have possessed a large share of them, would have made some appeal or reference to them, in their circular epistles to the Churches, as their predecessors had done, for the honor of the Gospel, and the credit of their own ministry. But instead of this, it is remarkable, that there is not the least claim or pretension, in all their several pieces, to any of those extraordinary gifts, which are the subject of this inquiry; nor to any standing power of working miracles, as residing still among them, for the conversion of the Heathen world. The whole purpose of their writings is, to illustrate the excellence and purity of the Christian Doctrine; and the whole power of their ministry seems to have lain, in the innocent and amiable character of their lives, and in the pious, charitable, and fervent strain of their pastoral exhortations.

They speak indeed in general, of certain *spiritual Gifts*, as abounding among the Christians of that age: yet these cannot reasonably be interpreted to mean any thing more, than the *ordinary gifts and graces* of the Gospel, *faith, hope and charity; the love of God and of man*; which they all recommend in the warmest terms, and appear to have possessed in the highest degree. *Archbishop Wake* however, who has translated their works into *English*, says, that, *in all probability, they were indued with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that there are sufficient indications of it in their writings* [1]: “ which he endeavours
 “ to confirm, not by any facts or express testimonies, drawn
 “ from themselves, but by inferences onely or conjectures,
 “ grounded on a supposed frequency of those endowments in
 “ that age, and the communication of them, as he says, to
 “ much lesser and worse men; on the sanctity of their lives,
 “ and the greatness of the stations, to which they were called

[1] See Prelim. Disc. c. x. §. 11, 12.

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“ by the Apostles; and on the accounts of them, transmitted
 “ to us by their Successors: from all which he concludes, that
 “ they were not onely instructed by persons inspired, but were
 “ themselves also in some measure inspired too, or indeed
 “ with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost [1].” But
 whatever gifts of this sort they may be supposed to have possessed,
 it is certain at least, as the same Translator of their works
 takes occasion to inculcate, that their endowments were *far in-*
ferior both in their kind and degree, to those of their Predecessors,
 the Apostles [2].

But the learned *Mr. Dodwell*, a writer of a more sanguin
 complexion, peremptorily declares, from the mere title or ad-
 dress of *St. Ignatius's* Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*, that
 miracles subsisted in great abundance in those days; because
 that Church is there stiled, *blest with every good gift, and want-*
ing in no good gift [3]. Yet these words, as they are explained
 by the context, manifestly signify nothing more, than the or-
 dinary gifts of the Gospel, *Faith and Charity*: for the whole
 passage runs thus: *To the Church of God the Father, and of the*
beloved Jesus Christ, which God hath mercifully blest with every good
gift, being filled with Faith and Charity, so as to be wanting in no
good gift [4]. In another Epistle likewise of *St. Ignatius*, to the
Romans, written on his journey towards *Rome*, whither he was
 going to suffer martyrdom, there are these words; “ I am
 “ willing to die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech
 “ you, that you shew not an unseasonable good will towards
 “ me: suffer me to be food for the wild beasts, by whom I

[1] See Prelim. Disc. c. x. § 18, 23.

[2] *Ib* § 11, 23.

[3] Dissertat. in Iren. 11. §. vii.

[4] Ἐλητημένη ἐν παντί χαρίσματι, τι-

πληροφορημένη ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ, αὐ-
 σερήτω ὅσην παντός χαρίσματι. Epist.
 ad Smyrn.

“ shall attain unto God: for I am the wheat of God, and
 “ shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may
 “ be found the pure bread of Christ, &c. [1].” From which
 words, the same learned person again infers, *that the prayers of
 the primitive Christians had the power to disable the wild beasts from
 assaulting the Martyrs, who were exposed to them in the Amphitheatres* [2]. Yet the passage itself has not the least reference to
 prayers, or to any thing miraculous, but to the ordinary en-
 deavours and intercession of the Christian brethren at Rome,
 who offered to use their interest to preserve him from that cruel
 death, which he was then going to suffer: to which sense it is
 expressly restrained, in the relation of his Martyrdom, written
 by those who accompanied him in this very journey, and were
 present at his death, by whom we are told; “ that the bre-
 “ thren, who came out to meet him on his approach to that
 “ city, and were zealous for his safety, *undertook to appease the
 “ people,* so that when he came to be exposed to the wild beasts
 “ in the Amphitheatre, *they should not desire his destruction:* but
 “ the Saint over-ruled, *and commanded them to be quiet* [3].”
 “ And to the same sense also Dr. Cave has interpreted it, in
 his *Life of this Saint*. “ The Christians at Rome, says he, came
 “ out to meet and entertain him—and when some of them
 “ did but intimate, that possibly the people might be taken off
 “ from desiring his death; he expressed a pious indignation,
 “ intreating them to cast no rubs in his way, that might hinder
 “ him, now he was hastening to his crown [4].”

[1] Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μὴ εὐνοία ἀκαίρῳ
 γίνεσθε μοι. ἄφ’ ἧς καὶ Σπείρων εὐχαι Bo-
 ρᾶν. &c. Ad Rom. c. iv.

[2] Ex Epistola ad Romanos intelligi-
 mus, Martyribus nonnullis datum, ne pos-
 sent in eos bestia maniffa favire. Proinde
 illud a Romanis anxillimis precibus conten-

dit, ne eorum orationibus id in sua causa
 contingeret. Diff. Iren. 2. §. xxx.

[3] See Relat. of Martyrd. of S. Ignat.
 § 9, 10, 12.

[4] See Cave’s Lives of the Saints, Vol.
 I p. 105. §. 8.

And in truth, all the other expressions of these Fathers, which are commonly understood to signify the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, may be interpreted more rationally and more agreeably to the general turn of their writings to denote only the ordinary graces of the Gospel, faith and charity; which they constantly extoll, as superior to all other perfections; as *things wonderfull and admirable*; and *the peculiar gifts of God*: [1] nay in some places, they seem even to disclaim all gifts of a more extraordinary kind. Thus *Polycarp*, in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, says; “these things, my brethren, “ I took not the liberty to write to you of myself, concerning righteousness, but you before encouraged me to it. For “ neither I, nor any other such as I am, can come up to the “ wisdom of the blessed and renowned *Paul*. And in the “ same Epistle he declares, that it was not granted to him, “ to practise that, which is written in the Scripture; *be angry “ and sin not, and let not the sun go down upon your wrath* [2].” St. *Ignatius* also, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, says; “these “ things I prescribe to you, not as if I were some body extraordinary, for tho’ I am bound for his name, I am not yet “ perfect in *Jesus Christ*, but now I begin to learn, and speak “ to you, as to fellow disciples. For I ought to have been “ stirred up by you in faith, in admonition, &c. [3]”

[1] Clem. 1. Epist. ad Corinth. c. 46. 50. it. Ignat. Ep. ad Ephes. xiv.

Thus when St. *Clement* tells the *Corinthians*, that *they had all been blessed with a large effusion of the Holy Spirit*. [§ 11.] yet this effusion, as it appears from the context, was not of a kind which conferred any extraordinary powers, but only pious affections and good inclinations. And in the same Epistle, where he is exhorting them to submit themselves, one to another,

according to the gift, which had been bestowed upon each: he means nothing more by *that gift*, or *charisma*, as he calls it, than the different talents, abilities, and advantages, whether natural or acquired, of strength, wisdom, riches, continence, &c. by which Providence thinks fit to distinguish the different characters of men. § 38.

[2] Ep. ad Philipp. c. 111. it. c. xlii.

[3] Ad Ephes. c. 111.

This same Saint indeed, in one or two of his Epistles, seems to intimate, that the knowledge of certain events had been communicated to him by the Spirit. Thus, in his Epistle to the *Philadelphians*, speaking of the earnest exhortations, which he had given them, to unity and submission to their *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, he says; “ some people suspected, that I was acquainted before hand with the divisions among you: but he is my witness, for whom I am bound, that I did not know it from any human flesh, but the spirit declared it, speaking thus, *do nothing without your Bishop*, &c.” [1] from which Dr. Wake takes occasion to infer *that he was indued with a large Portion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost* [2]: yet I do not find, that any other Commentator has ventured to build any thing miraculous or supernatural upon it.

It is related likewise of *Polycarp*, in the ancient narrative of his martyrdom, “ how in the time of that persecution, in which his life was particularly sought for by the Heathen Magistrates, he withdrew himself from *Smyrna*, by the advice of his friends, into a little village, where he spent his days and nights in prayer, with a few, who accompanied him; and as he was praying, a vision was offered to him, three days before he was taken, in which he saw his pillow on fire: whereupon, turning presently to his companions, he said prophetically, I must certainly be burnt alive.” The same narrative calls him also a *Prophetic teacher*; and declares, *that every word, which he uttered, had either been fulfilled, or would be fulfilled*. [3] Whence some later writers have affirmed, that he was indued with a spirit of prophecy, and foretold every

[1] Ibid. c. vii.

[3] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. v. cvi.

[2] See Prelim. Treat. c. x. §. 13.

An INQUIRY into

thing, that was to happen to him. But the foresight of his death, and the manner of it, in the time of a cruel persecution, when his person was particularly hunted from village to village, as the principal and destined sacrifice, may reasonably be considered as the effect of common prudence, without recurring to any thing miraculous.

Here then we have an interval of about half a century, the earliest and purest of all Christian Antiquity after the days of the Apostles, in which we find not the least reference to any standing power of working miracles, as exerted openly in the Church, for the conviction of unbelievers; but on the contrary, the strongest reason to presume, that the extraordinary gifts of the Apostolic age were by this time actually withdrawn; and the Gospel left to make it's way by it's own strength, and the authority of those credentials, and original miracles, with which Christ had furnished it, as an effectual security of it's success and triumphs over the powers of the earth. Yet before we take leave of these Apostolic Fathers, it may be proper to observe, for the prevention of unnecessary cavils; that, if from the passages referred to above, or from any other, which may be found in them, it should appear probable to any, that they were favored on some occasions, with *extraordinary illuminations, visions, or divine impressions*, I shall not dispute that point with them, but remind them onely, that the gifts of that sort were merely personal, granted for their particular comfort, and reaching no farther than to themselves; and do not therefore in any manner affect or relate to the question now before us.

But if the Apostolic writers have left us in the dark, with regard to our present argument, their Successors, it must be owned, as far as their authority reaches, have cleared it from

all obscurity, by their strong, explicit, and repeated attestations of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, which were constantly and publicly exerted in the Christian Church, through each succeeding age.

Justin Martyr, who is supposed to have written his first Apology within fifty years after the days of the Apostles, says, “ There are prophetic gifts among us at this day, and both “ men and women indued with extraordinary powers by “ the Spirit of God [1].” And he frequently appeals, to “ what every one might see with his own eyes, in every part “ of the world, and particularly in *Rome*, in the case of per- “ sons possessed with Devils; who were cured and set free, and “ the Devils themselves baffled and driven away by the Chri- “ stians, adjuring or exorcising them in the name of *Jesus*, when all other Exorcists and Inchanters had tried in vain to help them [2].”

Irenæus, who was contemporary with *Justin*, but wrote somewhat later, and lived much longer, affirms; “ that all, “ who were truly disciples of *Jesus*, receiving grace from him, “ wrought miracles in his name, for the good of mankind, “ according to the gift, which each man had received: some “ cast out Devils, so that those, from whom they were eject- “ ed, often turned believers, and continued in the Church: “ others had the knowledge of future events, visions, and “ prophetic sayings: others healed the sick by the imposition “ of hands, that even the dead had been raised, and lived af- “ terwards many years among them: that it was impossible,

[1] Πᾶσα γὰρ ἡμῶν καὶ μίχρη νῦν προ-
φητικὰ χαρίσματα εἰσιν, &c. Καὶ παρ’
ἡμῶν εἰσὶν ἰδεῖν καὶ θηλείας καὶ ἄρσενας χα-
ρίσματα ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχον-

τας. Dial. par. 2. p. 315, & 330. Edit.
Thirlb.

[2] Apolog. 2. p. 116. vid. etiam p.
190, 303, 320, 21, &c.

“ to reckon up all the mighty works, which the Church performed every day, to the benefit of nations; neither deceiving, nor making a gain of any, but freely bestowing, what it had freely received [1].” And as to the particular miracle of *raising the dead*, he declares it, “ to have been frequently performed on necessary occasions; when by great fasting, and the joint supplication of the Church of that place, the spirit of the dead person returned into him, and the man was given back to the prayers of the Saints [2].” And again, “ we hear many, says he, in the Church indued with prophetic gifts; speaking with all kind of tongues; laying open the secrets of men for the public good; and expounding the mysteries of God [3].”

Theophilus, Bishop of *Antioch*, who lived in the same age with *Irenæus*, speaking of the *evil and seducing Spirits*, which used to inspire the Poets and Prophets of the Heathen world, says; “ the truth of this is manifestly shewn; because those, who are possessed by such Spirits, are sometimes exorcised even at this day by us, in the name of the true God; when these seducing Spirits confess themselves to be the same Demons, who had before inspired the Heathen Poets [4].”

Tertullian, who flourished towards the end of the second, and died in the beginning of the third century, challenges the Heathen Magistrates, “ to call before their tribunals, any person possessed with a *Devil*: and if the evil spirit, when exorcised by any Christian whatsoever, did not own himself to be a Devil, as truly, as in other places, he would falsely

[1] *Advers. Hæres.* l. 2. c. LVII. p. 188.

Edit. Oxon. it. *Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* l. 5. c. 7.

[2] *Adv. Hæres.* l. 2. c. LVII. p. 186.
it. *Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* *ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.* l. 5. c. VI. p. 400.

[4] *Ad. Autolyc.* l. 21. p. 87. c. ad
calcem *Oper. Just. Mart. Par.* 1636.

“ call himself a God, not daring to tell a lie to a Christian,
 “ that then they should take the life of that Christian: and
 “ what is more manifest, adds he, than this operation; what
 “ more convincing than this proof [1]?” In another place,
 “ there is a Sister, says he, among us, indued with the gifts
 “ of revelations, which she suffers in the Church, during the
 “ time of divine service, by an ecstasy in the spirit: she con-
 “ verses with Angels, and sometimes also with the Lord: sees
 “ and hears mysteries: and knows the hearts of some, and pre-
 “ scribes medicines to those, who want them [2].”

Minucius Felix, who is supposed to have written in the be-
 ginning of the third century, addressing himself to his Heathen
 friend in his Dialogue, called *Octavius*, says; “ the greatest
 “ part of you know, what confessions the Demons make
 “ concerning themselves, as oft as they are expelled by us
 “ out of the bodies of men, by the torture of our words,
 “ and the fire of our speech. *Saturn* himself, and *Serapis* and
 “ *Jupiter*, and the rest of them, whom you worship, con-
 “ strained by the pain, which they feel, confess what they are:
 “ nor in this, do they tell us a lie, tho’ it be to their own
 “ shame, especially when some of your people are present.
 “ Believe them therefore to be Demons, from their own testi-
 “ mony, and true confession. For being adjured by the true
 “ and onely God, they unwillingly and wretchedly betray
 “ their uneasiness in the bodies of men; and either fly out
 “ instantly, or vanish gradually, in proportion as the faith

[1] Edatur hoc aliquis sub tribunalibus
 vestris, quod Demone agi consuet. Iustus
 a quolibet Christiano loqui spiritus ille,
 tam se Demonem confitebitur de vero,

quam Deum alibi de falso—quid isto ope-
 re manifestius? quid hac probatione fide-
 lius? Apolog. c. 23.

[2] De Anima. § 9.

“ of the patient, or the grace of the agent assists towards the
 “ cure [1].

Origen, who lived at the same time with *Minucius*, ~~who~~ some-
 thing younger, declares; “ that there remained still among the
 “ Christians of his days, the manifest indications of that Holy
 “ Spirit, which was seen in the shape of a Dove. For they
 “ drive away Devils, says he; perform many cures; foresee
 “ things to come; according to the will of the divine Word:
 “ and tho’ *Celsus* and the *Jew*, who is introduced by him, will
 “ make a jest, of what I am going to say, I will say it never-
 “ theless; that many people, as it were against their wills,
 “ have been brought over to Christianity, by the Spirit giving
 “ a sudden turn to their minds, and offering visions to them
 “ either by day or by night; so that instead of hating the
 “ word, they became ready even to lay down their lives for it.
 “ I have seen many examples of this sort; and should I only
 “ set down such of them, as were transacted in my presence, I
 “ should expose myself to the loud laughter of the unbelievers,
 “ who imagine that we, like the rest, whom they suspect of
 “ forging such things, are imposing our forgeries also upon
 “ them: but God is my witness, that my sole purpose is, to re-
 “ commend the religion of *Jesus*, not by fictitious tales, but
 “ by clear and evident facts [2].”

In another place, he says; “ that miracles began with
 “ the preaching of *Jesus*, were multiplied after his ascen-
 “ sion, and then again decreased; but that, even in his
 “ days, some remains of them continued with a few, whose
 “ souls were cleansed by the word, and a Life conformable to

[1] *Minuc. Octav. p. 23. ad Calceem*
 Edit. Cyprian. per Rigalt. Paris.

[2] *Cont. Cels. l. 1. p. 34, 35. Edit.*
 Cant.

“ it [1].” Again; some, says he, in proof of a miraculous power received through faith in Christ, heal the sick, by invoking the name of God over them, and of *Jesus*, with a recital of some story of his life. I myself have seen many so healed in difficult cases; loss of senses, madness, and innumerable other evils, which neither men nor Devils could cure [2].” Again; speaking of Devils, We are so far, says he, from worshipping them, that by prayers and the rehearsal of some passages of the sacred writ, we drive them before us; out of men and places, and also out of beasts; for they sometimes attempt to do mischief also to these [3].” Then as to the method of performing this miracle, “ it was not, he says, by any curious, magical, or enchanting arts, but by prayer alone, and certain plain adjurations or exorcisms, which any simple Christian might perform: for even common and illiterate laymen were generally the actors in this case [4].” In which no man was more eminent, than one of his own disciples, *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-worker*, who cast out Devils, not only by word of mouth, but even by a message, or mandatory letter to them; as the Ecclesiastical writers have recorded of him [5].

Cyprian, the scholar of *Tertullian*, who wrote about the middle of the third century, speaking of *prophetic visions*, which was the peculiar gift of that age, says; “ besides the visions of the night, even boys among us are filled with the Holy Ghost,

[1] Σημεῖα δὲ τῆ ἀγνῆς πνεύματος καὶ ἀρχῆς μὲν τῆς ἰσθῆς διδασκαλίας, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάληψιν αὐτῶν πολλὰ ἰδιώματα, ὅσων δὲ ἐλάττωται. πολλὰ καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ ἐν ἡμεῖς αὐτῶν παρ’ ὀλίγοις. &c. ib. l. 7 p. 337 n. l. 2. 62.

[2] Ibid. l. 3. p. 124

[3] Εἴθ’ ὅτε δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ζώων. πολ-

λαὶς γὰρ ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἐνεργεσι τὰς αἰδαιμονίας Ibid. l. 7. p. 370.

[4] Ὡς ἐπίπαι γὰρ ἰδιώται τὸ τοιοῦτον. Ibid. p. 334.

[5] Κακῇ πρώτῳ μὲν λαϊκὸς ἄν. πολλὰ σημεῖα ἐποιεῖ, νοσήτας θεραπεύων, καὶ δαιμονίας δὲ ἐπιστολῶν φυγαδεύων. Socrat. Hist. l. 4. 27.

“ and

“ and in fits of ecstacy, see, hear, and speak things, by which
 “ the Lord thinks fit to instruct us [1].” And describing all
 the various pranks of the Devils, “ they insinuate themselves,
 “ says he, into the bodies of men, raise terrors in the mind,
 “ distortions in the limbs, break the constitution, and bring
 “ on diseases—yet adjured by us in the name of the true God,
 “ they presently yield, confess, and are forced to quit the bo-
 “ dies, which they possessed. You may see them by our com-
 “ mand, and the secret operation of the divine power, lashed
 “ with scourges, scorched with fire, tortured by an increase
 “ of pains; howling, groaning, begging; confessing whence
 “ they came, and whither they go, even in the hearing of
 “ their own worshippers: and they either fly out immediately,
 “ or vanish gradually, according to the faith of the patient,
 “ or the grace of him, who works the cure [2].” In another
 place, treating again on the same miracle, “ it is performed,
 “ says he, at this day, so that the Devil is lashed and burned
 “ and tortured by the Exorcists, with human words, but a
 “ divine power: and when he promises to go out, and to dis-
 “ miss the men of God, he often deceives, and by the same lie
 “ of obstinacy and fraud, does what *Pharaoh* had done before,
 “ till he is oppressed by the salutary water of Baptism [3].”

Arnobius, who is supposed to have published his book

[1] *Præter nocturnas enim visiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu sancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in extasi videt oculis, & audit & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere & instruere dignatur.* Epist. ix. Edit. Rigalt. Par.

[2] *Ibid.* De Idolol. vanit. p. 200.

[3] *Ibid.* Epist. 70. p. 154. The example of *Pharaoh* here alluded to, is explained by him in the following manner:

King *Pharaoh* having struggled and persisted in his perversity, was able to carry on his resistance so far, till he came to the water, where he was subdued and destroyed. For that Sense as *St. Paul* says, was the Sacrament of Baptism.—And so he shews how the Devils used to act the same part, when adjured by the Christian Exorcists, and continued to afflict the people of God till they came to the water of Baptism.

against the Gentiles, in the year of Christ 303, tells us, “ that Christ used to appear sometimes in those days, to just
“ and holy men, not in vain dreams, but in his pure and
“ simple form: and that the mention of his name put the
“ evil spirits to flight; struck their prophets dumb; deprived
“ the Southsayers of the power of answering; and frustrated
“ the acts of arrogant Magicians; not by the terror or hatred
“ of his name, as the Heathens pretended, but by the efficacy
“ of his superior power [1].”

Lactantius, the disciple of *Arnobius*, who flourished and wrote about the same time, speaking of those Dæmons or evil spirits, says; “ that being adjured by the Christians in the name of
“ God, they retire out of the bodies of men; and being lashed
“ by their words, as by scourges, confess themselves to be
“ Dæmons; and even tell their names; the same, which are
“ adored in the Temples; and this even in the presence of their
“ worshippers; yet casting no reproach on religion, but on
“ their own honor, because it is not in their power to lie
“ either to God, in whose name they are adjured, or to the
“ just, by whose voice they are tortured: wherefore after many
“ howlings, they frequently cry out, that they are scourged
“ and burned, and are going out instantly [2].”

These are the principal testimonies, which assert the miraculous gifts of the Primitive Church, through the three first centuries: which might be supported still by many more of the same kind, and from the same, as well as different writers, if it

[1] Qui iustissimis viris etiam nunc impollutis, ac diligentibus sese, non per vana insomnia, sed per puræ speciem simplicitatis apparet. Cujus nomen auditum fugat noxios spiritus. Imponit silentium vatibus. Haruspices inconsultos reddit. Arrogan-

tium Magorum frustrari efficit actiones, non horrore, ut dicitur, nominis, sed majoris licentia potestatis. lib. 1. p. 13. ad Calcem Oper. Cyprian. Edit. per Rigalt.

[2] Divin. Institut. lib. 2. c. 16.

were necessary [1]. But these are sufficient for our purpose: and the warmest admirers of those ages, will not scruple, I dare say, to risk the fate of the cause upon the merit of them: for if these cannot command belief, the credit of the miracles in question must sink at once; since Christian antiquity can furnish no other evidence in their favor, half so strong and authentic as this.

I shall close this first article with a remark or two, which it seems naturally to suggest. It has already been observed, that the silence of all the Apostolic writers, on the subject of these gifts, must dispose us to conclude, that in those days they were actually withdrawn. And if this conclusion be thought to have any weight in it, then surely the pretended revival of them, after a cessation of forty or fifty years, and the confident attestation of them made by all the succeeding Fathers, cannot fail of infusing a suspicion of some fiction in the case. For if they did really cease for so long an interval, and at a time, when the Christian cause seemed to want them the most, as being then deprived of it's first and ablest champions, the Apostles, we cannot conceive any reason, why they should afterwards be revived, when the Church, without any such help, had been gathering more and more strength all that while, by its own natural force. But it is remarkable, that as the Church continued to increase in power and credit, so it's miraculous gifts are said to have increased also in the same proportion: for tho' by an increase of power it certainly stood less in need of true miracles, yet by the same power it became more able to reward, and more likely therefore to excite false pretensions to them.

[1] See Mr. *Whiston's* Account of the *Dæmoniacks*, &c. in which he has collected many more testimonies relating to them,

to shew, that the gift of curing them continued to the middle of the fourth century.

Again, the difference which every one may perceive, between the miraculous gifts of the Apostolic days, and these of the following ages, not only in the nature, but in the manner also of exerting them, will greatly confirm the suspicion just intimated. The Apostles wrought their miracles on special occasions, when they felt themselves prompted to it by a divine impulse; but at other times, were destitute of that power; as it is evident from many facts and instances, recorded in the New Testament. Agreeably to which, tho' they appeal sometimes, in confirmation of their mission, to the miraculous works, which their Master had enabled them to perform, yet we never find them calling out upon the Magistrates and people, to come and see the mighty wonders, which they were ready to exhibit before their eyes, on all occasions, at any warning, and in all places, whenever they thought fit. Whereas this confident and ostentatious manner of proclaiming their extraordinary powers, carries with it an air of quackery and imposture, as it was practised by the primitive wonder-workers; who, in the affair especially of casting out Devils, challenge all the world to come and see, with what a superiority of power they could chastise and drive those evil spirits out of the bodies of men, when no other *Conjurers, Incanters, or Exorcists*, either among the Jews or the Gentiles, had been able to eject them.

II. Under this head, I shall briefly lay before the reader, all such notices, as I have been able to draw, from any of the Primitive writers, concerning the persons, who were indued with these extraordinary gifts, and wrought the several miracles, to which they appeal.

Now whenever we think, or speak with reverence, of those primitive times, it is with regard always to these very Fathers, whose testimonies I have been collecting; who have left behind them, in their writings, the genuin specimens of their sanctity and abilities. *Venerable Saints, and eminent lights of the best and purest ages*, as *Dr. Waterland* calls them, *and of admirable indowments, ordinary and extraordinary* [1]. And they were indeed the chief persons and champions of the Christian cause in those days; the Pastors, Bishops, and Martyrs of the Primitive Church. Yet none of these *Venerable Saints* have any where affirmed, that either they themselves, or the Apostolic Fathers before them, were indued with any power of working miracles, but declare onely in general, “ that such powers were actually
 “ subsisting in their days, and openly exerted in the Church;
 “ that they had often seen the wonderful effects of them; and
 “ that every body else might see the same, whenever they pleased:” but as to the persons, who wrought them, they leave us strangely in the dark; for instead of specifying their names, conditions, or characters, their general stile is, “ such and such works
 “ are done among us, or by us; by our people; by a few; by many; by our Exorcists; by ignorant laymen, women, boys, and
 “ any simple Christian whatsoever:” but in the particular case of *casting out Devils*, *Origen* expressly says, *that it was performed generally by laymen* [2]. Agreeably to which *Mr. Whiston* declares,
 “ that this gift, which he ranks amongst the greatest of miracles, was wholly appropriated by our Saviour, to the
 “ meaner sort of Christians, with an exclusion even of the

[1] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin.
 p. 143, 160, 169.

[2] ὡς ἐπὶ πάντων γὰρ ἰδιώται τὸ τοιαύτον
 πράττεσι. Con. Cell. 7. 334.

“ Clergy, so that, after the days of the Apostles, none of
“ the sacred order ever pretended to it [1].

But of what condition soever the actors were, it is certain, that in the performance of their miracles, they were always charged with fraud and imposture by their adversaries. *Lucian* tells us, *that whenever any crafty juggler, expert in his trade, and who knew how to make a right use of things, went over to the Christians, he was sure to grow rich immediately, by making a prey of their simplicity* [2]. And *Celsus* represents all the Christian wonder-workers, as mere vagabonds and common cheats, “ who rambled about to play their tricks at fairs and markets; “ not in the circles of the wiser and better sort, for among such “ they never ventured to appear; but wherever they observed “ a set of raw young fellows, slaves or fools; there they took “ care to intrude themselves and to display all their arts [3].” *Cæcilius* also calls them, *a lurking nation; skimming the light; mute in public; prating in corners* [4].

The same charge was constantly urged against them by all the other enemies of the Christian Faith, *Julian, Porphyry, &c.* of whom *Dr. Waterland* however has taken occasion to declare, *that they had some regard to truth, in what they said, and to public report, and to their own characters* [5]. But as this

[1] See his Account of the Dæmoniacs, P. 52, 53, 57.

[2] *Ηυτοίνου παρείληθής εις αὐτῶς γόης, καὶ τεχνίτης ἀνθρώπου, καὶ πρᾶξιμασι χρησθαι δυνάμενος, αὐτίκα μάλα πλάσιεν ἐν βραχεῖ ἐγένετο, ἰδιώταις ἀνθρώποις ἐρχανών.* De Mort. Pereg. T. 2. p. 568. Ed. Var.

[3] Ὁ δὲ γόησις ἡμᾶς καλεῖ, καὶ φησιν ὅτι φεύγομεν τῆς χαριεστέρης προσεπάδου, ὡς ἐκ ἐτοιμῆς ἀπαλᾶσθαι, παλεύομεν δὲ τὰς ἀγροικίους. &c. Orig. con.

Cels. l. 6. p. 284. vid. it. l. 3. p. 141.

[4] *Latebrosa & lucifuga natio; in publicum muta; in angulis garrula, &c.* Minuc. Fel. p. 7.

[5] “ I know not whether *Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian*, would have said such “ a thing, in the greatest extremity of “ their rage. They had some regard to “ truth and to public report, and to their “ own characters.” Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 426.

seems to have been an hasty and inconsiderate concession, made to serve a particular point, which he was then urging, that *the antient Infidels were better men than the moderns*, so I shall lay no stress upon it, but observe only on the whole, that from these short hints and characters of the primitive wonder-workers, as given both by friends and enemies, we may fairly conclude; that the celebrated gifts of those ages were generally engrossed and exercised by private Christians, chiefly of the layety; who used to travel about from City to City, to assist the ordinary Pastors of the Church, and Preachers of the Gospel, in the conversion of the Pagans, by the extraordinary gifts with which they were supposed to be induced by the Spirit of God, and the miraculous works, which they pretended to perform.

And here again, we see a dispensation of things ascribed to God, quite different from that, which we meet with in the New Testament. For in those days, the power of working miracles was committed to none but the Apostles, and to a few of the most eminent of the other disciples, who were particularly commissioned to propagate the Gospel, and preside in the Church of Christ: but upon the pretended revival of the same powers in the following ages, we find the administration of them committed, not to those, who were instructed with the government of the Church; not to the successors of the Apostles, to the Bishops, the Martyrs, or the principal Champions of the Christian cause; but *to boys, to women*, and above all, *to private and obscure laymen*, not only of an inferior, but sometimes also of *a bad character* [1]. But if those venerable Saints
and

[1] Νυνὶ δὲ καὶ δι' ἀναξίον ἐκτελεῖν ὁ θεὸς
ἐπιφέρει. Chrysost. T. 3. p. 66. c. Edit

Benedict.

Adjicient præterea multa de auctoritate
eujusque

and Martyrs were not indued with them when living, they had amends made to them when dead, if we can believe the reports of their successors, by a profusion of them on their bones and reliques: which suggests a farther cause of suspecting the faith and judgement of those early ages. For how can we think it credible, that God should withhold his distinguishing favors, from his faithful servants when living, to bestow them on their rotten bones? or employ his extraordinary power, to no other use, but to perpetuate a manifest imposture in his Church? since it is to those ancient tales, so gravely attested, of miracles wrought *by the bones of Saints and Martyrs*, that the Church of *Rome* owes all that trade, which she still draws, from the same fund and treasure of her wonder-working reliques: and if we can believe such stories, as they are delivered to us by the Primitive writers, we cannot condemn a practice, which is evidently grounded upon them.

These things, I say, are so strange, as to give just reason to suspect, that there was some original fraud in the case; and that those strolling wonder-workers, by a dexterity of juggling, which art, not Heaven had taught them, imposed upon the credulity of the pious Fathers, whose strong prejudices and ardent zeal for the interest of Christianity, would dispose them to embrace, without examination, whatever seemed to promote so good a cause. That this was really the case in some instances, is certain and notorious: and that it was so in all, will

cujusque Doctoris Hæretici; illos maxime doctrinæ suæ fidem confirmasse, mortuos suscitasse, debiles reformasse, futura significasse, ut merito Apostoli crederentur. Tertull. De præscript. Hæreticor. § 44.

Εκείνο δὲ προσέθηκεν τῇ εὐχῇ, ὅτι ὅτε πᾶς ὁ ἀποφθνήσκων, ὕσται· ὅτι. πᾶς ὁ

δαίμονος δαύου. Constitut. Apostol. 1 8 c. 2.

Ut intelligamus, quædam miracula etiam sceleratos homines facere, quæ sancti facere non possunt. August. Oper. T. 6. p. 71.

appear

appear still more probable, when we have considered, in the next place, the particular characters of the several Fathers, on whose testimony, the credit of those wonderfull narratives depends.

III. The authority of a writer, who affirms any questionable fact, must depend on the character of his veracity and of his judgement. As far as we are assured of the one, so far are we assured, that he does not willingly deceive us; and from our good opinion of the other, we persuade ourselves, that he was not deceived himself: but in proportion as there is reason to doubt of either; there will always be reason to doubt, of the truth of what he delivers. Nay, in many cases, the want of judgement alone, has all the same effect, as the want of veracity too, towards invalidating the testimony of a witness: especially in cases of an extraordinary, or miraculous nature; where the weakness of men is the most liable to be imposed upon; and the more so, as it happens to be joined to the greater piety and simplicity of manners. Since this then is the sole rule of determining the measure of credit, which is due to a witness of any strange and questionable facts, I shall apply it to the case before us; and examine what proofs of a sound judgement and strict veracity are to be found in the writings of those Fathers, who attest the miraculous stories, which we are now considering.

As to the Apostolic Fathers, of whom I have spoken above, since they have contributed but little towards the illustration of the present question, and bear no direct testimony in it; or none at least, but what confirms the point, which I am defending; there is no reason to enter into the consideration of their particular characters. Their works, as I have said, are translated into *English*, so that every one may judge of them for himself.

himself. They appear to have been men of great piety, integrity, and simplicity: and that is all, I think, which we need to declare of them on this occasion.

Justin Martyr comes next, whose genius will best be illustrated by some specimens of it, extracted from his writings. We have seen above, that among the indowments conferred in an extraordinary manner on the Primitive Christians, *the gift of expounding the holy Scriptures, or the mysteries of God*, was reckoned one: and this, as *Justin* frequently affirms, *was granted by the special grace of God to himself* [1]. Let us inquire then, what use he made of this divine gift: and if ever he was really enlightened by it, we might surely expect to find the effects of it there, where he is discoursing *on the mystery of the Cross*; which he declares to be the greatest symbol of power and dominion, and explains in the following manner. “Consider, says he, all the
“things in the world, whether they could be administered,
“or have any communication with each other, without this
“form of the Cross. The Sea could not be passed, unless that
“trophy called the sail, were preserved in the ship: the earth
“could not be tilled without it: for neither diggers nor arti-
“ficers could do their work, but by instruments of this shape.
“The form of man differs in nothing else from other animals,
“but in the erection of his body, and the extension of his arms,
“and the projection of his nose from the forehead, through
“which respiration is made, and which shews nothing else but
“the figure of the cross: in which sense also it is spoken of by
“the Prophet; *Christ the Lord is the breath before our face* [2].”

[1] Απεκάλυψεν ἔν ἡμῖν πάντα ὅσα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτῆς νοησάμεν. Dial. pag. 2. p. 352.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναμις ἐμοὶ τοιαύτη τις ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ χάρις παρὰ Θεοῦ μόνη εἰς τὸ συνιέναι

τὰς γραφαὶς αὐτῆς ἐδόθη μοι. Ib. p. 258.

[2] Κατανοήσῃς γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, εἰ ἄνευ τῆς σχήματος τέτς διοικίσθαι, ἢ κοινανίαν ἔχειν δύναται, &c. Apol. 1. p. 82.

Upon this passage the very pious and learned Dr. *Grabe* makes the following remarks, which I would recommend to all the zealous admirers of these *venerable Saints* and *purest ages*; “*that the holy Martyr must not be rashly blamed, for an interpretation so forced and far fetched; because it was the prevailing custom of that age, to import into the sacred text senses, which did not belong to it* [1].”

Again; “*Hear, says Justin, how Christ, after he was crucified, fulfilled the symbol of the tree of life in Paradise, and of all the other things, which were to happen afterwards to the righteous. For Moses was sent with a rod, to redeem his people: with this rod he divided the sea; brought water out of the rock; and with a piece of wood, made the bitter water sweet. Jacob also with sticks, made his uncle Laban's sheep bring forth such lambs, as were to be his own again, &c.* [2].” And so he goes on, in this way of allusion, to apply all the sticks and pieces of wood in the Old Testament to the Cross of Christ: and pursuing the same argument in another place, where he is describing the fight of the *Israelites* with *Amalek*, he says, “*that when the son of Nun, called Jesus, led the people on to battle, Moses employed himself in prayer, with his hands stretched out in the form of a Cross; that, as long as he continued in that posture, Amalek was beaten; but when he remitted any thing of it, his own people suffered: and that all this was owing to the power of the cross: for the people did not conquer, because*

[1] Alium autem sensum tradit hoc loc. *Justinus*, qui namque longe quidem petitus videtur: nec tamen S. Martyr licet coeternere reprehendendus, quod mos litius ac uti inter Judæos, quam Christianos obtinuerit, sacro textui haud immo- sensus

sub inferre. Vid. not. (29) ad *Justin. ibid.*

[2] Ὅτι δὲ, μὲν τὸ σταυροῦναι τὸν — εὐαγγελιστὴν εἶχε τὴν ἑσθίαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὅ ἐν τῇ παλαιότητι περιέσβετο ἐκκλησία, καὶ τῶν γεννημένων πάντων τοῖς δικαίοις, ἀκα- σαί, &c. Id. Dial. p. 2. p. 325, 326.

“ *Moses* prayed; but because, while the name of *Jesus* was at the head of the battel, *Moses* was exhibiting the figure of the Cross [1].” It would be endless to run through all the interpretations of the same kind, which are to be found in this Father; since his works are but little else, than a wretched collection of them: the pure flights of an enthusiastic fancy and heated brain, which no man in his sober senses could mistake for divine revelations. Yet as absurd as they now appear to be, this pious Father insists, that they were all suggested to him from Heaven; and appeals to the *Jews* themselves against whom he was applying them, *whether they thought it possible for him, to acquire so perfect a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, if he had not received from the author of them, the grace or gift, to understand them* [2]. What credit then can be due to this Father, in the report of other people’s gifts and inspirations, who was so grossly deceived himself, or willing at least to deceive others, in this confident attestation of his own? Dr. *Cave* tells us, that *Justin* was wholly ignorant of the Hebrew tongue; which was the cause of his childish blunders, whenever he meddled with it. “ Every one, says he, who has dipped but ever so little into that tongue, knows, that *Satan* in the Hebrew signifies an adversary: but see the ridiculous interpretation of *Justin*: He is called *Satanas*, says the Martyr; a name compounded agreeably to his nature, of *Sata*, which signifies an Apostate, and *Nas*, a Serpent, &c. [3].” But for a farther illustration

[1] Οὐ γὰρ ὅτι, ὅπως ἡύχαιο Μωϋσῆς, διὰ τῆτο κρείσσων ὁ λαὸς ἔγνω, ἀλλ’ ὅτι — αὐτὸς τὸ (ἡμεῖον τῷ σαυρῷ ἐποίησεν. Ibid. p. 336.

[2] Οἷεσθε ἂν ἡμᾶς πολλοί, ὡς ἄνδρες, νενοσημένοι δυνθῆναι ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς τούτοις, εἰ μὴ θελήματι τῷ θελήσαντος αὐτὰ ἐλά-

βομεν χάριν τῶν κλησῶν. Dial. par. 2. p. 390.

[3] Litterarum Hebraicarum rudem penitus & imperitum fuisse, *Justin*o vitio verti non debet, &c. — Hinc factum est, ut in Hebraeis adeo pueriliter lapsus sit exemplum dabo, &c. Cave Hist. Litter. p. 61. Edit. ult.

of his character, I shall give an instance or two of the doctrines, which he teaches, as orthodox and Apostolical, as well as of the facts, which he asserts, as certain and unquæstionable.

He declares, that all the Christians, who were in all points orthodox, embraced and believed the doctrine of the *millennium*: “ that all the Saints should be raised in the flesh, and reign “ with *Christ* in *Jerusalem*, enlarged and beautified in a wonderful manner for their reception, in the enjoyment of all “ sensual pleasures, for a thousand years before the general “ resurrection [1].” Which doctrine he deduces from the testimony of the Prophets and of St. *John* the Apostle; and was followed in it by the Fathers of the second and third centuries: yet the doctrine itself was afterwards exploded, as it well deserved, not only as absurd and monstrous, but as impious and heretical. St. *Jerom* treats it as a mere fable, or *dream of the Jews, and Judaizing Christians*. Yet from the authority of those Fathers, who asserted it, and the credit, which it had obtained with the generality of Christians, he foresaw, as he tells us, *what a furious storm he should raise against himself by that freedom* [2]. The sure fate of all those, who, in any age of the Church, from the earliest times down to the present, have had the virtue and courage to attack any popular error, or reigning superstition.

He asserts another doctrine full as monstrous; “ that God

[1] Ἦγώ δὲ καὶ εἰ τινὲς εἰσιν ὀρθογνώμονες κατὰ πάντα χριστιανοί, καὶ σαρκὸς αἰδέσασιν γενέσθαι ἐπιστάμεθα, καὶ χίλια ἔτη ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ, οἰκοδομηθείσῃ, καὶ κοσμηθείσῃ, καὶ πλατυθείσῃ, &c. Dialog. par. 2. p. 313.

[2] Quæ qui recipiunt, mille quoque annorum fabulam & terrenum Salvatoris imperium Judaico errore suscipient—Comment. in Isa. c. 30. Oper. Tom. 3. p.

262. Edit. Benedict.

Ex quo discimus mille annorum fabulam, in qua rursus nuptiæ promittuntur, & cibi & terrenæ vitæ conversatio, abjiciendam. Ib. p. 436.

Ut præfaga mente jam cernam, quætorum in me rabies concitanda sit. ibid. p. 478.

“ having created the world, committed the care of it to Angels; who transgressing their duty, fell in love with women, and begot children on them, whom we call Dæmons; who subdued mankind to their power; partly by magical writings; partly by terrors, and punishments; and partly by the institution of sacrifices, fumes, and libations; of which they began presently to stand in need, after they had enslaved themselves to their lusts and passions, &c. [1].” And in another place, “ the truth, says he, shall come out; that evil Dæmons of old debauched women and corrupted boys, and spread terrors among men; who did not examine things by reason; but seized with fear, and not knowing, that these Dæmons were evil spirits, called them Gods, and gave every one that name, which they had each taken to themselves. But when *Socrates* by true reason endeavoured to expose their practices, and draw men away from their worship, they, by the help of wicked men, took care to get him put to death, as an Atheist and impious person [2].”

He professes likewise the highest regard for certain spurious books, which were published under the names of the *Sibyl* and *Hydaspis*; which he treats with the same reverence as the Prophetic Scriptures; appeals to them as divine, and says, that “ by the contrivance of Dæmons, it was made a capital crime to read them, in order to deter men from coming at the knowledge of what was good, and keep them still in subjection to themselves: which yet, adds he, they were not able to effect: for we not only read them freely without fear, but offer them

[1] Οἱ δὲ ἄγγελοι, παραβάντες τὴνδε τὴν τάξιν, γυναικῶν μίξεσιν ἠπλῆθησαν, καὶ παῖδας ἐτέκνωσαν, οἳ εἰσὶν οἱ λεγόμενοι δαίμονες, &c. *Apol.* 2. p. 112.

[2] Εἰσέσειαι γὰρ τ' ἀληθές. ἐπεὶ τὸ πάλαιον δαίμονες φαῦλοι ἐπιφανείας ποιούμενοι, καὶ γυναίκας ἐμοίχευσαν καὶ παῖδας διέφθειραν. &c. *ib.* *Apol.* 1. p. x.

“also, as you see, to your perusal; knowing, that they will
 “be found acceptable to all [1].” And it is certain, that
 from this example and authority of *Justin*, these silly writings
 were held in the highest veneration by the Fathers and rulers of
 the Church, thro’ all succeeding ages.

Clemens of Alexandria supposes them to have been inspired by
 God, in the same manner as the Prophets of the Old Testa-
 ment: which he confirms by the authority both of St. *Peter* and
 of St. *Paul*, whom he cites as appealing to them, for a pre-
 diction of the life and character of *Jesus*. “For as God, says
 “*Clemens*, out of his desire to save the *Jews*, gave them Pro-
 “phets, so raising up Prophets also to the *Greeks*, from their
 “own nation and language, as far as they were capable of re-
 “ceiving that good gift of God, he separated them from the
 “vulgar, as not onely the Preaching of *Peter*, but the Apostle
 “*Paul* also declares, speaking thus; *take the Greek books into*
 “*your hands, and look into the Sibyl, how clearly she speaks of one*
 “*God, and of the things to come: then take Hyfaspes also and read,*
 “*and you will find the Son of God much more clearly and evidently*
 “*described: and that many Kings shall employ all their forces against*
 “*Christ, out of their hatred to him, and to all who bear his*
 “*name* [2].”

The

[1] Καὶ Σίβυλλα δὲ καὶ Ὑφάσπης, γε-
 νήσεσθαι τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλασιν διὰ πυρὸς
 ἔφασαν. *Apol.* i. p. 30.

Καὶ ἐνέργειαν δὲ τῶν φαύλων δαιμόνων,
 θάνατον ὡρίσθη κατὰ τῶν τὰς Ὑφάσπης, ἢ
 Σιβύλλης, ἢ τῶν προφητῶν βίβλος ἀνα-
 γινοσκόντων &c. *ib.* p. 67.

[2] *Clem. Alex. Strom.* l. 6. p. 761.
Edit. Ox. The *Preaching of Peter*, Κήρυ-
 ξμα Πέτρου, was the title of a spurious
 book, ascribed to that Apostle: which

is often cited as genuin by *Clemens*, *Origen*,
 and the other Fathers, and was forged
 probably in the age, immediately succed-
 ing to that of the Apostles. [*Vid. Cave*
Hist. Litt. V. i. p. 6. *it. Grab. Spicil.*
Patr. T. 1. p. 62.] The passage also cited
 here from St. *Paul*, was taken from some
 other spurious piece now unknown, which
 then passed for the work of that Apostle.
 [*Vid. Not. ad loc. Clem.*] *Hyfaspes* is
 called by *Lactantius*, a most ancient King of
 the

The heathens on the other hand charged the Christians with the forgery of these books, and gave the title of *Sibyllists*, by way of contempt, to those, who held them to be divine [1]. Which charge the Fathers constantly denied and treated as a pure calumny [2]: Yet all the Critics of these days allow the fact

the *Medes*: [1. 7. c. 16.] and by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, the *Father of Darius*: and is said to have been a master of all the doctrine of the *Magi*. Vid. *Amm. Marc.* l. 23. c. 6. & *Not. Valef.*

[1] *Origen*, speaking of *Celsus* says; Ἐπεὶ δὲ τινὰς εἶναι καὶ Σιβυλλιστάς, &c. *Con. Cel.* l. 5. 272.

[2] *Celsus* having charged the Christians with inserting many blasphemous passages into the verses of the *Sibyl*, *Origen* observes in answer to him, that he had neither produced any passages, so inserted, nor any antient and correct copies of the verses themselves, which wanted such passages; which he ought to have done, if he had been able. [1. 7. 369.] this indeed was, to put the controverfy upon a right foot; by which however, as the learned *Valesius* remarks, *Celsus* might easily have made good his charge, and detected the forgery. [Not. in *Euseb. Vit. Constant.* p. 700. Edit. Cant.] If he did not therefore produce any old copies, which wanted the passages in question, the reason of it must be, that he either thought it unnecessary, in a case so manifest, or that the books themselves were not easy to be found.

The succeeding Fathers treat the same objection in a manner wholly equivocal and evasive. *Laëtantius*, after he has alleged many verses from the *Sibyl*, in which the principal acts and miracles of *Jesus* are circumstantially described, says; “those, who are confuted by these testimonies,

“ usually fly to this shift, of declaring these
“ verses, not to be the *Sibyl*’s, but forged
“ and composed by our people: which
“ no man will believe, who has read
“ *Cicero* and *Varro*, and the rest of the an-
“ tient writers, who make mention of the
“ *Erythraean* and the other *Sibyls*, and
“ who were all dead before *Christ* was
“ born.” [De Ver. Sap. l. 4. 15.] The
four following verses, cited from the *Sibyl*
by *Laëtantius*, will serve as a specimen of
the rest.

Εἰν ἄρτοις ἅμα πέντε καὶ ἰχθύεσσι δυοῖσιν
Ἄνδρῶν χιλιάδας ἐν ἐρήμῳ πέντε κορέσσει.
Καὶ τὰ περισσεύοντα λαβὼν μετὰ κλάσ-
ματα πάντα,
Δώδεκα πληρώσει κοφίνους εἰς ἐλπίδα
πολλῶν.

With five loaves and two fishes
He will satisfy five thousand men in
the desert.
Then gathering up the fragments,
which remain,
He will fill twelve baskets for the con-
firmation of many.

Eusebius has preserved an *Acrostick*, said to have been taken from the *Erythraean Sibyl*; in which the initial letters of each line compose the following greek words, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, Θεοῦ Υἱὸς, Σωτὴρ, Σταυ-
ρός. *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, Cross.* He tells us however, “that many
“ people,

fact to be true, and consider it, as one of the pious frauds of those primitive ages. *There is no man*, says Dr. Cave, *who does not see, that they were forged for the advancement of the Christian faith* [1]. Some impute the Fraud to *Hermas*; some to *Papias*; and others to *Justin* himself. Mr. *Blondel* and Mr. *Dodwell* charge it upon the Heretics, called *Montanists*; but by a gross mistake,

“ people, tho’ they allowed the *Erythraean Sibyl* to have been a *Prophetess*, yet rejected this *Acrostick*, suspecting it to have been forged by the Christians.—but the truth, adds he, is manifest: and our people have been so exact in computing the times, as to leave no room to imagine, that the verses were made after the coming of Christ, and falsely sent abroad, as the predictions of the *Sibyl*. For it is agreed by all, that *Cicero* had read this poem, which he translated into the latin tongue, and inserted into his own works.” [Vid. Constant. p. 700. Ed. Cant.] Now the sole ground of this confident assertion is, that *Cicero* speaking of certain verses, ascribed to the *Sibyl*, which had really been forged by the partisans of *J. Cæsar*, to serve a political design, after he has ridiculed the verses themselves, and the purpose of them, intimates, that they were composed in the form of an *Acrostick*, which was a work of labor and attention, not of madness or ecstacy, and could not therefore come from the *Sibyl*. Div. 2. 54.

St. *Austin* has given us a latin translation of the same *Acrostick*, which he introduces thus; “ The *Erythraean Sibyl* has indeed written some things, clearly and manifestly relating to Christ; which I have read in the latin tongue, tho’ in bad verses, thro’ the unskilfulness of the translator, as I afterwards understood. For *Flaccianus*, an eminent person, who

“ had been Proconsul; a man of flowing eloquence and great learning; as we were conversing together on the subject of Christ, produced a greek book, bearing the verses, he said, of the *Erythraean Sibyl*, where he shewed in a certain place, how the initial letters of each verse were managed so, as to form the words, *Ιησους, Χριστος, &c.* ” [De Civ. Dei, 18. 23.] But the same Father declares in another place, that *there were some, who suspected all these prophecies, which related to Christ, and passed under the name of the Sibyl, to have been forged by the Christians* [ib. c. 46.] Upon which the learned Editor of his works, *Ludovicus Vivès*, remarks, that they could not be forged, because they are cited both by *Lactantius* and *Eusebius*. [Not. in loc.] Thus a most gross and palpable forgery was imposed upon the Christian world, from the very midst of those best and purest ages; which tho’ rejected and derided from the beginning by all men of sense among the Heathens, yet obtained full credit in the Church, through all ages, without any other ground to support it, but the utility of the deceit, and the authority of those venerable Fathers, who contrived and attested it.

[1] *Hadriano imperante, forsitan circa ann. 136. nata videntur.—conficta esse, idque in gratiam Christianae fidei nemo non videt. Cave Hist. litt. Vol. I. p. 57 Edit. Oxon.*

as Dr. Cave observes, since *Montanus* was not in being, till forty years after *the Sibylline books* were known to the world [1].

Justin affirms also that silly story, concerning the *Septuagint version* of the Old Testament, “ That it was made by seventy
“ Elders sent for that purpose from *Jerusalem* to *Ægypt*, at the
“ request of King *Ptolemy*: whom that King shut up in as
“ many separate cells, and obliged them, each to translate the
“ whole Bible apart, and without any communication with
“ each other: yet all their several translations were found to
“ agree verbatim from the beginning to the end; and by that
“ means were demonstrated to be of divine inspiration.” And to raise the greater attention to his story, he introduces it, by declaring, “ that he is not telling us a fable or forged tale; but
“ that he himself had seen at *Alexandria* the remains of those
“ very cells, in which the Translators had been shut up [2]. But repeating the same story in his *Apology*, he makes an unhappy blunder, by saying, that *King Ptolemy’s message to beg the assistance of those seventy translators, was sent to Herod, King of Jerusalem*; whereas *Herod* happened to live about three hundred years later than *Ptolemy* [3]. Dr. *Grabe* endeavours to excuse *Justin* by the help of a forced criticism, which the ingenious Editor of *Justin’s Apology*, with good reason derides; since this pious Father was certainly guilty here of that weakness, against which St. *Paul* warned both *Timothy* and *Titus*, of giving too much heed to profane, Jewish and old woman’s fables [4];

[1] Vid. Cave ib. p. 28. it. Dodwell. Dissertation. Cyprian. 4. §. x.

[2] Ταῦτα ἡ μῦθος ὅμιν ὃ ἄνδρες ἑλληνες, ὅτε κατασκευάσαντες ἱεροῦ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ἀλλ’ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ γινόμενοι, καὶ τὰ ἔχοντα τῶν οἰκίσκων ἐν τῇ Φαρυῇ ἐωρακότες ἐτίσασθαι &c. Cohort.

ad Grac. p. 14.

[3] “ὅτε δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Αἰγυπτίων βασιλεὺς — πρὸς ἐπεμψέ τῷ τῶν Ἰερουσολύμων τότε βασιλευμένῳ Ἡρώδῃ &c. Apol. 1. p. 49. vid. Not. 8, 9.

[4] 1 Tim. iv. 7. Tit. i. 14. See Ant. Van Dale Dissert. de Arist. p. 146.

and

and furnishes a pregnant instance, how easily his prejudices might impose upon him in all other cases of the like nature.

To these specimens of his want of judgment, I might add several more, from his frequent use of *fabulous and apocryphal books*, forged by the first Christians, under the names of the Apostles; and likewise from his false and negligent manner of quoting the genuin Scriptures. Dr. *Grabe* has collected several instances of the first sort [1]; and his learned Editor finds frequent occasion to animadvert upon the second [2].

It will be said perhaps, that these instances shew indeed a weakness of judgement, yet do not impeach the veracity of *Justin*, as a witness of fact. With regard to which, we must call to mind, what is hinted above, that the want of judgement alone may, in some cases, disqualify a man as effectually, from being a good witness, as if he wanted veracity too. For example, *Justin* expressly affirms, *that he had seen the cells, in which the seventy were shut up to the task of translating the Bible*. Now it is certain, that there never were any such cells, nor any such translators: and the best excuse, which can be made for him is, that he was imposed upon by some *Jews* or *Christians* of *Alexandria*, who might shew him some old ruins, under the name of Cells, which his prepossession in favor of the story, owing to his natural credulity and want of judgement, made him take to be really such.

Again, in his Apology, addressed to the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, he charges them with paying divine honors to the Heretic and Impostor, *Simon*, of *Samaria*, commonly called the *Magician*: and for the truth of his charge, appeals

[1] Vid. Grabe Spicileg. Patr. Tom. 1. p. 14. 327. it. p. 19.

[2] Vid. Just. Apol. 1. p. 87. quæ dis-

putat. de feris venenosis &c. in deserto. it. p. 92. Not. 6. it. p. 206. Not. 20. it p. 203. Not. 16. it. Not. 18. p. 327.

to a Statue, then subsisting in *Rome*, and publicly dedicated to that *Simon* in the Island of the *Tiber*, with this Inscription, SIMONI DEO SANCTO [1]. But it is manifest beyond all reasonable doubt, as some learned men have shewn, that *Justin* was led here into a gross blunder, by his usual want of judgement and knowledge of *Roman* affairs, and his pre-conceived belief of certain fabulous stories, which passed current about this *Simon* among the first Christians [2]; for the Statue and Inscription, to which he appeals, were not dedicated to his Countryman, *Simon Magus*, of whose Deification there is not the least hint in any *Roman* writer, but to a *Sabine Deity*, of ancient worship in *Rome*, and of similar name, SEMONI SANCO [3], frequently mentioned by the old Writers: as the inscription itself, dug up, about two centuries ago, from the ruins of that very place, or little island, which *Justin* describes, has clearly demonstrated [4].

Now should we allow these cases, to be clear of any fraud or design to deceive; yet they yield so bad a sample of his understanding, as to render his testimony of very little weight

[1] "Ὁς ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου καίσαρος—θεὸς ἐνομίσθη καὶ ἀνδρείῳ παρ' ἡμῶν ὡς θεὸς τετίμηται. ὃς ἀνδρείας ἀνεγνήσκειν ἐν τῇ Τίβερει ποταμῷ, μετὰ τῶν δύο γεφυρῶν, ἔχον ἐπιγεγραφὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ταυτὴν, Σίμωνι Δεῷ Σάνκτῳ. Apol. 1. p. 39.

Justin was followed in the belief and assertion of this fact by all the succeeding Fathers. *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Augustinus*, *Epiphanius*, *Eusebius*.

[2] Vid. Ant. Van Dale de Statua Simoni Mago erecta. Dissertat.

[3] *Sancus*, as *Dionysius* writes, was a Deity of the old Sabines, whom some called Δία ὠρίων. [Vid. *Dionys. Hal. Antiq.* l. 2. 49. it. 4. 58.] and the Romans

Deum Fidum. And *Semo*, signified the same as Ἡμιθεοί, Demigods or Heroes deified. *Livy* mentions a Chappel of *Semo Sancus* in *Rome*—to whom the goods of certain enemies were consecrated.—bona Semoni Sancio consecrant consecranda positi—in Sacello Sanci versus ardem Quirini. Liv. 8. 20.

[4] SEMONI
SANCO
DEO FIDIO
SACRVM.

&c.

Gruter. Vol. 1. p. xcvi. 5. where there are several more Inscriptions to the same Deity.

in any other relation whatsoever. For if he was deceived in such plain and obvious facts, where a common discernment and moderate knowledge of history, would have enabled him to have discovered the truth, how much the more easily would he be caught by a confederacy of subtle and crafty Impostors, employing all their arts to amaze and dazzle the senses of the credulous, and to put off their surprizing tricks, for the miraculous effects of a divine power?

I cannot dismiss this Father, without taking notice of an accusation, which he frequently brings against the *Jews*, that *they had expunged many passages out of the Greek Bibles, in which the character and sufferings of Jesus were clearly described*: which charge all the learned of these later ages have found to be wholly groundless. Let us see then how he supports it. “ They have erased, says he, out of the book of *Esdra*s, the following words; *Esdra*s said to the people, this passover is our Saviour, and our refuge; and if you will but persuade yourselves, and be convinced in your hearts, that we are to humble him in a sign or figure, and afterwards to put our trust in him; this place shall not be made desolate to all ages, says the Lord of Hosts. But if you do not believe on him, nor attend to his preaching, you shall be as dirt to the nations [1].” The Editor of *Justin* remarks here, that this passage is not to be found, in any copies either of the *Apocryphal* or *Canonical Esdras*; nor in any other Christian writer, but *Lactantius*: and instead of being expunged by the *Jews*, appears to have been forged by the *Christians*: where he refers us to the censure of an able Critic and Protestant Divine, *John Croius*; who charges the forgery on *Justin* himself, in the following

[1] Ἀπὸ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἐξηγήσεων, ὧν ἐξη- πάχα. τὴν ἐξήγησιν ταύτην ἀφείλοντο, &c.
γῆτατο Ἐσδρας εἰς τὸν νόμον τὸν περὶ τῆ Dial. 292.

words; “ To propose what I think, freely and candidly; and
 “ what all honest and religious judges of these matters will
 “ allow to be true: I take this to have been a pious fraud of
 “ *Justin*, in which *Lactantius* followed him: who forged and
 “ published this passage, for the confirmation of the Christian
 “ Doctrine, as well as the greatest part of the *Sybilline Oracles*,
 “ and the Sentences of *Mercurius* [1].

Again, *Justin* affirms, that in the 90th Psalm it was said,
tell the nations that the Lord reigned from the tree: and that the
Jews had erased the words, *from the tree*. But as there is no
 footstep of these words, either in the Vulgate, or any of the
Greek or *Hebrew* copies, it is manifest, says the Editor, that
they were not expunged by the Jews, but added by the Christians
 [2]. Lastly, he charges them *with expunging a passage of Jere-*
miah, which yet he owns to be retained in some copies of
 their synagogues; as it actually is in all copies, both *Greek* and
Hebrew, to this day. Upon which the Editor says, *that he*
absolves the Jews again from all fraud, but cannot absolve Justin
from the utmost negligence and rashness [3]. So unlucky and inju-
 dicious was this Father, in his charge of these frauds on the
Jews, as to give an occasion only for fixing them after all
 upon the Christians, and, in the opinion of some, even upon
 himself.

[1] Sed satis patet ab aliquo Christiano
 conficta esse, non a Judæis deleta.—Quod
 autem *Joannes Croius*, Observat. in. N. T.
 p. 205. *Justinum* hujus fraudis artificem
 fuisse affirmat, in eo sane non Martyris
 nostri, in quem ista suspicio non cadit, sed
 suam potius ipsius existimationem lædit,
 &c. Vid. Not. ad loc.

[2] Manifestissimum tamen est, hæc

verba——non fuisse a Judæis resecta, sed
 ab aliquo Christiano addita, &c. Not. ad
 Dial. p. 294.

[3] Καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν διὰ Ἱερειμίου λεχθέντων
 ταῦτα περιέκοψαν. Ib. 295.

Nos quoque Judæos fraudis absolvimus,
Justinum summæ negligentiae & temeritatis
 absolvere non possumus. Not. ad loc.

The learned and ingenious Editor of his *Apologies* and *Dialogues*, who shews an inclination, to defend him on all occasions, where he is defensible, and on some, even where he is not, yet is often forced to break out into a kind of astonishment, at his ignorance, negligence, rashness, credulity, so gross in many instances, as to baffle all the art of criticism, nor to admit any certain rule, of collecting his real sense. Yet *there are some still*, says he, *who extol him, not onely as a most learned, but a most eloquent writer* [1].

Irenæus, whose character and doctrines come next to be considered, was, of all the Fathers, whose works still remain to us, the most diligent collector and assertor of *Apostolic traditions*. And in truth, as far as his judgement and veracity may be relied upon, he seems to have been well qualified for that character; being acquainted, as he tells us, with several, who had conversed familiarly with the Apostles, and curious also to inform himself, of all the particular doctrines, which they had ever taught by word of mouth. “He lived, says Mr. *Dodwell*, so near to the times of the Apostles, as to be able, “to transmit their doctrines to posterity with certainty and “fidelity, as they were delivered to him by oral tradition, “from their immediate Successors and Disciples [2].” Yet *Photius*, one of the ablest Critics of his own, or any other age of the Church, has intimated a different character of him in the following short censure upon his writings; in which, *he thought it necessary*, he says, *to advertise the reader, that in some of them, the purity of truth, with respect to Ecclesiastical doctrines,*

[1] Vid. Edit. Lond. 1722. & Clarissimi Thirlbii Annotat. ad p. 130, 206, 293, 378, &c. Et tamen sunt, qui hunc non tantum doctissimum, verum etiam eloquentissimum esse prædicant. p. 305.

[2] Sufficit enim, ut Apostolorum tempora ita prope contigerit, ut quid senserint Apostoli, posset orali traditione ad posteros deducere, traditionisque illius certus & fidelis esse testis. Diff. Iren. § 3.

is adulterated by his false and spurious reasonings [1]. But the following instances of the doctrines which he delivers, as orthodox and *Apostolic*, will be the surest rule of determining his real character, as well as the proper degree of credit, which may be due to his testimony.

He affirms then, *that our Saviour lived to an old age, or was fifty years old at the least*, at the time of his crucifixion; which he attempts to prove, first, from the reason of the thing; “ that as Christ came to save all men, of all ranks and “ degrees, so it was necessary, that he should pass through all “ the several stages of life, that he might be a pattern to them “ all: 2dly, from the unanimous tradition and positive testi- “ mony of all the old men, who had lived with St. *John*, and “ the other Apostles, from whom, he says, they all received “ this account, and constantly bore witness to the truth of it “ [2].” Yet *this unanimous tradition*, so solemnly vouched by this venerable Father, is as certainly false, as the Gospels are true. Dr. *Whitby*, after he has produced this same passage, cries out, as it were, with astonishment, “ Behold here, ac- “ cording to *Irenæus*, how all the Elders of *Asia* testify with “ one voice, that they had received from St. *John* and the “ other Apostles, a tradition, concerning a fact manifestly “ false! behold an *Apostolic* man, professing to prove from St. “ *John's Gospel*, things not onely contradictory to that Gospel,

[1] Phot. Bibl. c. cxx.

[2] Sic & Senior in Senioribus, ut sit perfectus Magister in omnibus, non solum secundum expositionem veritatis, sed & secundum ætatem, sanctificans simul Seniores, exemplum ipsis quoque siens—a quinquagesimo anno desinat jam in ætatem seniozem: quam habens Dominus noster docebat. Sicut Evangelium & omnes

Seniores testantur, qui in Asia apud Joannem discipulum Domini convenerunt, & ipsum tradidisse eis Joannem. Permanf autem cum eis usque ad Trajani tempor: Quidam autem eorum non solum Joannem sed & alios Apostolos viderunt, & ha eadem de ipsis audierunt: & testantur e hujusmodi relatione. Iren. l. 2. c. 39. Edit. Oxon.

“ but to the Articles of our Creed [1]! &c.” The learned *Cave* also, in his *Life of Irenæus* tells us, “ that he was betrayed
 “ into this error,—partly from a mistaken report, which he
 “ had somewhere picked up, (and it may be from his Master
 “ *Papias*) and partly out of opposition to his adversaries, who
 “ maintained, that our Saviour staid no longer upon earth,
 “ than till the thirty-first year of his age; against whom the
 “ eagerness of disputation tempted him to make good his asser-
 “ tion from any plausible pretence [2], &c.

He asserts likewise the doctrine of the *Millennium*, in the grossest sense of it, from the same authority of a tradition, handed down to him by all the old men, who had conversed with St *John*, and heard him relate, *what our Saviour himself used to teach concerning it*: of which he has recorded the following passage; “ The days will come, in which there shall grow
 “ vineyards, having each 10,000 vine stocks; and each stock,
 “ 10,000 branches; each branch, 10,000 shoots; each shoot
 “ 10,000 bunches; each bunch, 10,000 grapes; and each
 “ grape squeezed shall yield twenty-five measures of wine;
 “ and when any of the Saints shall go to pluck a bunch, another bunch will cry out, I am a better, take me, and bless
 “ the Lord through me. In like manner a grain of wheat
 “ sown shall bear 10,000 stalks; each stalk 10,000 grains;
 “ and each grain 10,000 pounds of the finest flower; and so
 “ all other fruits, feeds and herbs in the same proportion, &c.
 “ These words, says he, *Papias*, a disciple of St. *John*, and
 “ companion of *Polycarp*, an ancient man, testifies in writing
 “ in his fourth book, and adds, that they are credible to those

[1] Vid. Whitby Strict. Patr. in Joh.
 e. 8. 57. p. 220.

[2] Life of Iren. § x. p. 170.

“ who

“ who believe [1].” The pious and cautious Dr. *Grabe* remarks on this occasion, “ that what *Irenæus* says here about “ the stalks of grain, will be thought an argument of straw “ by those, to whom such things appear incredible: but, “ that we ought not however, either to deny or affirm any “ thing rashly [2].” But *Eusebius* gives a frank and clear solution of the matter, by informing us, that *Papias* was a weak man, of a very shallow understanding, as it appeared from his writings, and by mistaking the meaning of the Apostles, imposed these silly traditions on *Irenæus*, and the greatest part of the Ecclesiastical writers, who reflecting on the age of the man, and his near approach to the Apostles, were drawn by him into the same opinions [3].

Irenæus affirms also, on the same authority of tradition delivered to him by those, who had received it from the Apostles, that *Enoch* and *Elias* were translated into that very *Paradise*, from which *Adam* was expelled, to remain there, till the consummation of all things: and that it was the same place, into which

[1] Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Πάπιας, Ἰωάννη μὲν ἀκροῦς, Πολυκάρπῳ δὲ ἱταῖρῳ γελῶντι, ἀρχαῖῳ ἀντὶ ἐν γράφῳ ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ.— Et adjecit, dicens, hæc autem credibilia sunt credentibus. l. 5. p. 455.

Irenæus then proceeds to confirm this doctrine, by the testimonies of the Prophets, *Isaiab*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and the revelations of *St. John*: and contends, that it cannot be interpreted Allegorically, but will be fulfilled according to the letter in an earthly Jerusalem.

[2] Hoc quod *Irenæus* pro ubertate & magnitudine fructuum ex paleis nescit argumentum, *Stramineum* fortasse vocaverunt, quibus ista sunt incredibilia. Sed de hisce nihil temere negandum, uti nec affirmandum. Annot. ad loc. p. 455.

[3] Σφόδρα γὰρ οἱ σμικροὶ ὡν τὸν νῦν. ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων τεκμηριώμενον

εἶπεν φαίνεται. πλὴν καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν πλείουσιν, ὅσοις τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν, τῆς ὁμοίας αὐτῷ δόξης, παρκαίτερον γίγνεται, τὴν ἀρχαιοτέληα τ' αὐδρὸς προβεβλημένοις. ὥσπερ ἦν εἰρηναῖος, καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος τὰ ὅμοια φρονῶν ἀναπεφνηεν. Euf. Hist. l. 3. 39.

N. B. *Eusebius* indeed, in another place, speaks of *Papias* in a very different strain, as of a person singularly remarkable for his eloquence and knowledge of the Scriptures. [l. 3. c. 36.] But this passage, as the learned *Valesius* informs us, is not found in any of the old copies, which he had consulted, nor in the ancient version of *Rufinus*. Whence he concludes, that it was inserted by some ignorant Scholiast, as being contradictory to what *Eusebius* had more explicitly delivered elsewhere of the same *Papias*. Vid. Not. Vales. ad loc.

St. Paul also was caught up [1]. This is affirmed likewise by all the later Fathers, both *Greek* and *Latin*; induced to it, we may imagine, by the pretence of an Apostolical tradition: which yet from the absurdity of it, must necessarily be as false, as the rest abovementioned. *Feverdantius*, the learned Editor of *Irenæus*, remarks upon this place; that tho' *St. Austin* does not allow this opinion to be a point of faith, yet since *Irenæus* and all the Primitive Fathers declare it to have been the doctrine of the Apostles, he cannot think it safe to believe otherwise [2]. And we must needs own him to be in the right, if, according to the principles of the Church of *Rome*, we can think the positive testimony of *Irenæus*, or the concurrent authority of all the Fathers, of weight enough to bear down the common sense and reason of mankind.

He asserts likewise very strongly, the fabulous story of the *Septuagint version*, with all the particulars already recited, of its miraculous birth, and the separate cells, &c. To which he has added another, no less romantic; that the sacred Scriptures were utterly destroyed in the Babylonish captivity, but restored again, after seventy years, by *Esdra*s, inspired by God for that purpose [3]. And tho' in this also, he was followed by all the principal Fathers of the succeeding centuries, yet as *Dr. Prideaux*, and other learned men have remarked, there is no better foundation for it, than that fabulous relation, in the fourteenth chapter of the second apocryphal book of *Esdra*s: a book, too absurd even for the Romanists themselves, to admit into their canon [4]: and notwithstanding the authority of *Irenæus*, and of all the other

[1] Διὸ καὶ λήθσαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. τῶν Ἀποστόλων μαθηταί, τὰς μετὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἐκείνην μετὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν. &c. l. 5. p. 405.

[2] Vid. ibid. Not. 5.

[3] Ὅς—ἐν τῇ—αἰχμαλωσίᾳ τῇ, λαῶ

διαφθαρείσων τῶν γραφῶν—ἐνέπνευσεν Ἐσδρας τῷ ἱερεῖ. &c. l. 3. c. 25.

[4] *Prid. Connell. par. 1. p. 260.*
Vid. *Ant. Van Dale Dissert. de Ariste.*
p. 151.

Fathers, who assert the same opinion, Mr. Tillemont declares it to be very dangerous to religion, and tending, extremely to weaken the authority of the Scriptures [1]. He intimates also more than once, his belief, of *Angels mixing with the daughters of men*: where his Editor takes notice, that all the early Fathers were drawn into the same error, by the authority of the *Apocryphal book of Enoch*, cited by St. Jude [2]. Yet as monstrous as this error was, it maintained its ground, as Dr. Whitby assures us, through the four first centuries; tho' St. Chrysostom treats it, as *absurd and blasphemous*, and all, who espoused it, as *mad*; and Theodoret calls them *infatuated and very stupid* [3].

From some of the doctrines above mentioned, and particularly that of the *Millennium*, Mr. Chillingworth has proved against the *Romanists*, that the *Catholic Church*, even in the earliest ages, and within thirty or forty years after the *Apostles*, was not infallible in matters of faith: since all those absurdities were taught by the Fathers of those ages, not as their private opinions onely, but as doctrines of the Universal Church, derived immediately from the *Apostles*, and held so necessary, that those, who held the contrary, were hardly considered, as real Christians: to

[1] Mais l'autorite de ces Peres ne l'empêche pas d'alleguer diverse raisons contre une opinion, qu'on peut dire tres dangereuse a la religion, puisqu'elle affoiblit extremement l'autorite de l'Ecriture. Memoir. Ecclef. Tom. 3. p. 93.

[2] Cum Angeli transgressores commixti fuissent eis. l. 4. c. 70. p. 371. Not. 2. and l. 5. c. 29.

Neque Judas Apostolus, ad cujus testimonium Tertullianus provocat, libros Enochii canonicos fecit, dum quandam ex iis prophetiam de adventu Domini ad judi-

cium allegavit. &c. Grab. Spicil. Patr. Vol. I. in Not. p. 344.

Hæc forte respexit S. Judas vers. 6. scribens, Ἀγγέλους ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκλήριον &c. — Similiter ante ipsum S. Petrus in posteriori epistola c. 2. v. 4. cujus obscura quodammodo verba ex his Enochii verbis bene explicantur. ibid. p. 351.

[3] Obtinuit hæc sententia apud patres fere omnes, qui quatuor primævis seculis floruerunt &c. vid. Whitby Strictur. Patrum. in Gen. c. vi. 4. p. 5.

which he adds the following remark; that if *Papias*, who first committed them to writing, *could either by his own error, or a desire to deceive, cozen the Fathers of the purest age in this, why not also in other things? Why not in twenty, as well as one? And why might not twenty others do it as well as he* [1]?

As to *Irenæus's* manner of expounding the Scriptures, it is much the same with that of *Justin*, or rather, according to Dr. *Grabe*, with that of the age, in which he lived: following no rule of criticism; nor giving any attention to the proper signification of words; but indulging a wild and enthusiastic fancy, in the invention of typical senses, and forced allusions, utterly trifling and contemptible: *which those, who read the Fathers, must always bear in mind, as a learned Critic observes, or they will be drawn into great and frequent errors* [1].

Treating of the distinction of Animals into clean and unclean, he says; "The law foretold these things figuratively; " by animals denoting men. Those, who divide the hoof " and chew the cud, it pronounces clean: those, who do neither, unclean. Who then are clean? Those, who believe " in the Father and the Son. This is their Firmness or double " hoof: and to meditate day and night on the laws of God, " so as to be adorned with good works, is to chew the cud. " But the unclean neither divide the hoof nor chew the cud: " that is, neither have faith in God, nor meditate on his laws. " This is the abomination of the Gentiles. But such as chew

[1] See his *Additional Discourses*, p. 36, 37. at the end of his *Works*, in Edit. 7th.

[2] Quorum nec stylus magnopere est elaboratus, nec ratiocinationes ad rectæ rationis & veræ criticæ normam exactæ, nec notiones satis perspicuæ, aut per om-

nia inter sese consentientes, nec principia usquequaque vera. Quod iis, qui Scriptores Ecclesiasticos legunt, perpetuo animo obversari oportet, ni in frequentes & graves errores incidere velint. Jo. Cleric. Hist. Eccles. p. 775.

“ the cud, and do not divide the hoof, are unclean: this is a
“ figurative description of the *Jews* [1].” With much more
to the same purpose. In which method of reasoning, as he
followed *Barnabas*, and the Apostolic Fathers, so he was fol-
lowed himself by the later writers; and especially by *Clemens of*
Alexandria, who has copied this very passage [2].

Again, endeavouring to prove that the *Mosaic law* was to
fill up the middle age of the world, between the natural law,
and the law of Christ, he says; “ This was typically shewn
“ by many things, but especially by *Thamar*, daughter-in-law
“ to *Judas*. For when she was bringing out twins, one of
“ them put out his hand the first; and as the midwife supposed
“ him to be the firstborn, she tied a scarlet string about his
“ hand. But when this was done, he drew in his hand again,
“ and his brother *Phares* came out first; and after him *Zara*,
“ who had the mark. The Scripture clearly manifesting by it
“ the people, who had the scarlet sign; that is, the faith pro-
“ fessed by those of the foreskin, or the uncircumcised: which
“ was first shewn out in the Patriarchs, and then withdrawn,
“ that it's brother might be brought out first; and then he be
“ born afterwards, who had been shewn before, and was
“ known by the scarlet sign: which is the passion of the Just
“ one: præfigured from the beginning in *Abel*, described by
“ the Prophets, but perfected in the last days by the Son of
“ God [3.]

[1] Prædixit hæc omnia figuraliter lex,
de animalibus delineans hominem.—Qui
sunt ergo mundi? qui in Patrem & Filium
per Fidem iter firmiter faciunt: hæc est
enim firmitas eorum, qui duplicis sunt un-
gulæ. &c. l. 5. c. 8.

[2] Καθάρὰ καὶ δειλὰ τῷ Θεῷ παραδί-
δωκεν ἡ γυνὴ. ὡς ἂν εἰς παλίστρα καὶ εἰς υἱὸν

διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῶν δικαίων τὴν πορείαν
ποιουμένων αὐτῇ γὰρ ἡ τῶν διχηλάων ἐδραι-
ώτης. Strom. l. 7. xviii. p. 900. Ed.
Oxon.

[3] Hoc & per alia quidem multa, jam
vero & per *Thamar* *Judæ* nurum typice
ostenditur. &c. l. 4. c. 42.

His reasoning also upon the number of the Gospels is in the same strain: "It is impossible, says he, that there could have been more or less than four. For there are four climates, and four cardinal winds; and the Church is spread over the whole earth; but the Gospel is the pillar and foundation of the Church, and it's breath of life. The Church therefore was to have four pillars, blowing immortality from every quarter, and giving life to men [1], &c.

I have been the fuller in opening the characters and opinions of *Justin* and *Irenæus*, that I might save myself the trouble of enlarging in the same manner on the rest: especially as their characters will be sufficiently illustrated, by the specimens of them occasionally interspersed, in the sequel of this argument. But the later Fathers, generally speaking, do but copy the notions, and even the blunders of these two. For as they are the earliest, who have left any considerable works behind them, so they are the first likewise in credit and authority with succeeding ages, on the account of their piety, learning, and abilities: and the case was the same with the antients, as it is still with the moderns; that when any facts or doctrines have once been established by men of eminent character, they are usually taken upon trust by all who follow, till some new inquirer

[1] Neque autem plura numero quam hæc sunt, neque rursus pauciora capit esse Evangelia. *Επειδὴ*—τίσσαρα κλίματα τῷ κόσμῳ, ἐν ᾧ ἴσμεν, εἰσὶ, καὶ τίσσαρα καθόλικα πνεύματα. &c. l. 3. p. 220, 21.

N. B. This puts me in mind of a specimen also of *Tertullian's* judgment and way of reasoning, on the question; *why the number of the Apostles was twelve*, and no other. I can account for this, says he, not onely by the voices of the Prophets, but by arguments drawn from things: for I find this

number prefigured to us by the Creator. There were twelve wells in *Elim*: twelve gemms in the vest of *Aaron*; twelve stones chosen by *Joshua* out of the river *Jordan*, and deposited in the Ark of the covenant: by all which the twelve Apostles were signified; who like fountains, were to water the dry desert of the Gentile world; like gemms, to illuminate the sacred Vestment of the Church which Christ the High Priest put on: and like stones, were firm in the faith. *Cont. Marcion*. l. 4. p. 519. D.

arises,

arises, who, not content with opinions imposed on him by chance or education, resolves to judge for himself, and to use his natural right and liberty of searching into the real grounds of them.

For instance; St. *Clemens of Rome* having alledged the ridiculous story of the *Phœnix*, as a type and proof of the resurrection; all the later Fathers take it from him of course, and refer us to the same bird, not onely as really existing, but as created on purpose by God, to refute the incredulity of the Gentiles, on the subject of this great article of our faith. Yet all the heathen writers, from whom they borrowed the story, from *Herodotus*, down to their own times, treat it as nothing else but a mere fable [1]. The case is the same with all the other facts, and absurd doctrines above specified; of the *Millennium*; of *Angels debauching women, and begetting Dæmons*; of the divinity of the *Septuagint version*; of the destruction of the sacred Scriptures in the *Babylonish captivity*, &c. In all which, these two Fathers, whose principles I have been illustrating, were implicitly followed, for a century or two at least, by all their Successors. *Irenæus* indeed stands single in his account of the old age of Christ; tho' confidently affirmed by him, on the pretended authority of all the Apostles; because it was evidently inconsistent with the history of the Gospels. But the later Fathers generally ran into a contrary extreme, and affirmed, what was maintained by the Heretics onely of *Irenæus's days*, that our Lord preached but one complete year, and died at the age of thirty: which, according to *Clemens of Alexandria*, was both foretold by the

[1] Ἐμοὶ μὲν ὡς πρὸς λέγοντες &c. Bochart. Hierozoic. Par. poster. l. 6. c. 5. p. 817.
Herodot. l. 2. § 73. Vid. it. Whitby Stric-
tur. Patr. in Psalm xcii. 12. p. 85. it.

Prophets, and affirmed by the Evangelists [1]. Whereas from the history of the Gospels, it is evident, that his ministry continued through *several successive Passovers*, or as Sir *Isaac Newton* has with great probability computed, through five; and that he died in his *thirty-fourth year* [2].

Now from what I have above collected, it is certain, that if a gross absurdity of opinions, and the belief of things impossible, be the proof of a weak mind; if expositions of the Scriptures, void of reason and common sense, betray a great want of judgement, then we may justly charge those defects upon these ancient fathers; from whose foolish reasonings, both in religion and morality, whole books have been compiled [3].

Mr.

[1] Καὶ ὅτι ἐνιαυτὸν μόνον ἔδει αὐτὸν κηρύξαι, καὶ τῷτο γέγραπται ἕτως. ἐνιαυτὸν δεξιὸν κυρίῳ κηρύξαι ἀπέστειλε με. τῷτο καὶ ὁ προφῆτης εἶπεν, καὶ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον. Strom. 1. p. 407. Vid. Not. in loc. Edit. Oxon. Quinto decimo anno imperii (Tiberii) passus est Christus, annos habens triginta cum pateretur. Tertull. adv. Jud. p. 215.

[2] Thus have we, in the Gospels of *Matthew* and *John*, all things told in due order, from the beginning of *John's* preaching to the Death of Christ; and the years distinguished by such essential characters, that they cannot be mistaken. Observat. on the Proph. of Dan. c. xi. p. 159.

[3] Vid. Dan. Whitby. *Strictures Patrum*—*Traité de la Morale des Peres*. Par Jean Barbeyrac—*Dallæus &c.*

N. B. I shall here take the liberty to transcribe the following note, from a very ingenious and candid Advocate of Christianity, the Rev. *Archdeacon of Carlisle*, as it exhibits a just idea of the characters and writings of the earliest Fathers.

“ Christianity was in it's infancy, at
“ most in it's childhood, when these men
“ wrote, and therefore it is no wonder,
“ that they *spake as children*, that they
“ *understood as children*, that they *thought*
“ *as children*. This was according to the
“ œconomy they were then under. And
“ besides, they had not time and leisure
“ to search into the Christian doctrines,
“ nor had they laid in a sufficient stock
“ and fund for that purpose, they being
“ but newly adopted into the Christian
“ Church: yet they were willing to appear
“ in it's behalf, and to defend it as well
“ as they could, which was accepted by
“ Heaven [Edwards's *Patrologia*. p. 57.]
“ Let me not be censured, tho' I should
“ be so bold as to say, that we should
“ have understood the Scriptures much
“ better, if we had not had the writings
“ of the Fathers; for they have obscured
“ and depraved them by their different
“ and contrary comments: They have
“ raised controversies, taught men to quar-
“ rel and dispute about the sense of seve-

“ ral

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of their most zealous admirers, does not pretend to defend them on this head; but frankly owns, that their way of reasoning is *loose, sophistical and declamatory; far short of the solidity of the moderns; who excell them not only in philosophy and learning, but in the knowledge of antiquity, and even of their own languages: and all that he pleads for in favour of their interpretations, especially of the New Testament, is, that they should not be wholly slighted, though they have but little sense in them, because they were agreeable to the custom or taste of those ages* [1].

As to the question of their veracity, it may admit perhaps some debate, and it will probably be thought harsh in the opinion of many, to suspect men of such piety and sanctity of life, either of the invention, or the propagation of known forgeries. Yet there are many things so peremptorily affirmed, without any ground of truth or probability, by the two Fathers, whose characters I have been considering, as to give us too much cause for such a suspicion: which, as we have seen above, has been actually charged on *Justin*, by men of learning, and may, with equal reason, be charged also on *Irenæus*. For what other account can be given of his frequent appeals to the tradition and testimony of the Apostles, for the support of so many absurd and incredible doctrines? If the doctrines them-

“ ral texts, which otherwise are plain and
“ obvious, and about several matters of
“ practice, which are evident enough in
“ themselves, some of which are super-
“ stitious &c. *ib.* p. 135.” See Considerations on the State of the world with regard to Religion &c. p. 174.

[1] Quin bonas litteras studiosius ex-cultas a nuperis nostris Ecclesiæ Reforma-toribus libenter agnoscimus. Nec in phi-losophia modo, sed in antiquitate, in ipsis etiam linguis eorum temporum vernaculis.

Sed & pressiorem nostris & solidiorem argu-mentandi methodum agnoscimus, quam sit alia illa laxior & sophistica & declamatoria, quæ non apud Patres duntaxat; sed & alios eorumdem temporum Scriptores, erat receptissima. *Dodwell, Prefat. ad Dissertat. in Iren. § 12.*

Sic illis mirum deferendum esse in Scripturarum interpretatione censemus, ut ne quidem ratio, quæ aliquid minus solidum, quæ tamen fuerint in eorum scriptis, plane negligenda sint. *ib.* § 12.

selves be false; the pretended tradition of them could not possibly be true: and if we absolve *Irenæus* from the forgery; it must be charged on somebody else, more antient still, and of authority enough, to impose it upon him; and on whomsoever it may fall, it gives but a lamentable idea of those primitive ages, and primitive champions of the Christian cause.

Papias, who is supposed to have been the disciple of St. *John*, and Bishop of *Hierapolis*, is said to have given rise to most of the fabulous traditions, which obtained in those early days. Dr. *Whitby* joins *Irenæus* to him, and says, “it is very remarkable, that these two earliest writers of the second century, who, on the credit of idle reports and uncertain fame, have delivered to us things said to be done by the Apostles and their scholars, have shamefully imposed upon us, by the forgery of fables and false stories [1].” But whoever forged the rest of the spurious traditions above recited, yet that, which relates to *the old age of Jesus*, the most solemnly attested of them all, and peculiar to *Irenæus*, may be fairly presumed to be his own forgery, because it was never embraced by any body else, and was singularly adapted to the argument, which he was then asserting, in opposition to certain Heretics, called *Valentinians*, who allowed *but one entire year* to our Saviour’s ministry [2].

But be that as it will; since the very earliest of all traditions, and the nearest to the fountain’s head, are found to be so corrupt; it will demonstrate at least, what a treacherous foundation they must be, to build any opinion upon, and much

[1] Id denique imprimis observandum est, duos primos Scriptores secundi seculi, qui ex rumusculis famaue dubia res gestas a Domini Apostolis, eorumque discipulis nobis tradiderunt,—fabulis fingendis, fal-

sisque narrationibus, nobis turpiter illufisse. Præf. ad Strictur. Patr. p. LXXIII.

[2] Ἐνιαυτῷ γὰρ ἐνὶ βύλῳ αὐτὸν μὲν τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτῷ κεκηρυχέναι. *Iren.* l. 1. c. 1. p. 16.

more, any article of our faith; which might be exemplified by many other instances from the history of the first centuries. For as soon as religious disputes began to infest the Church, the plea of Apostolical tradition was presently employed, as the most effectual to silence an adversary; and was taken up therefore and urged with equal confidence by all sides. And it is an argument indeed, which of all others seems the best calculated for the use of controversy: for wherever it meets with credit, it must necessarily have great weight; and where it happens even to find none, yet it cannot easily be confuted; as not being reducible to any clear test, or fixed rule, by which it may be tried. It is not therefore strange, to find its authority carried so high, and in some cases, magnified even above the Scriptures themselves, by all the dealers in controversy, from the earliest Fathers down to Dr. *Waterland*.

For example; in that most antient and celebrated dispute between the eastern and western Churches, *about the time of bolding their Easter*, St. *Polycarp*, Bishop of *Smyrna*, the Disciple and immediate Successor of the Apostles, and *Anicetus* his contemporary, the Bishop of *Rome*, severally alledged the authority of *Apostolic tradition* for their different practice, from which neither of them could be induced to depart [1]. But *Papias*, as it is hinted above, the disciple of *Polycarp*, was the chief promotor and assertor of it: “as oft, says he, as I met
“ with any one, who had conversed with the antients, I
“ always inquired very diligently after their sayings and doc-
“ trines: what *Andrew*, *Peter*, *Philip*, *John*,—and the rest of
“ our Lord’s Apostles used to teach. For I was persuaded,

[1] Ούτε γὰρ ὁ Ανίκητος τὸν Πολύκαρ-
πον πείσαι ἰδύνατο μὴ τηρεῖν ἅτε μετὰ
Ἰωάννη τῷ μαθητῇ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, καὶ τῶν

λοιπῶν Αποστόλων, οἷς συνδιέτριψεν, αἰεὶ
τετηρηκότα. &c. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5.
c. 24.

“ that I could not profit so much by books, as by the voice of
 “ living witnesses [1].” *Irenæus*, the scholar of *Papias*, who
 had learnt the use of it from his master, was likewise a zealous
 assertor of it. “ If a dispute, says he, should arise, about
 “ any matter, tho’ but of little moment, ought we not to have
 “ recourse to the most antient Churches, in which the Apostles
 “ resided, and take from them what is certain and clear
 “ about the point in question [2]?” *Tertullian* declares it to
 be the onely weapon, that can knock down an Hæretic: and in
 all such controversies, advances it’s authority above the Scriptures;
 nay, forbids any appeal to the Scriptures, as hurtful to the
 cause of truth. *We must not appeal to the Scriptures*, says he,
or trust the merits of the cause with them: in which there can either
be no victory, or an uncertain one, or what is equivalent to uncertain
 [3]. And in this, *Dr. Waterland* declares, *that he seems to have*
judged well, upon the prudential case, and like a wise and sagacious
man, with regard to the circumstances of those times [4]. And in
 another place the same learned Doctor observes, from the au-
 thority of *Irenæus*, that *Polycarp had converted great numbers to*
the Faith by the strength of tradition; being a sensible argument, and

[1] Εἰ δὲ πῶς καὶ παρηκολυθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἴλθοι, τὰς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λέσεις. τί Ἀνδρέας, ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν, ἢ τί Φίλιππος, ἢ τί Θωμᾶς, ἢ Ἰάκωβος, ἢ τί Ἰωάννης, ἢ Ματθαῖος, ἢ τίς ἕτερος τῶν τῷ κυρίῳ μαθητῶν. &c. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. p. 136.

[2] Refert *Irenæus*, vir Apostolicorum temporum, & *Papiæ*, auditoris Evangelistæ Joannis, discipulas. Hieron. Ep. 53. ad Theodorum. Op. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 581. Edit. Benedict.

Et si aliquibus de aliqua modica questione disceptatio esset, nonne oporteret in

antiquissimas recurrere Ecclesias, in quibus Apostoli conversati sunt, & ab eis de præsentī questione sumere quod certum & reliquidum est? l. 3. c. iv. p. 205.

[3] Ergo non ad Scripturas provocandum est: nec in his constituendum certamen; in quibus aut nulla aut incerta victoria est, aut par incertæ. De præscript. Hæreticor. 19.

[4] Wherein to me he seems to have judged very well upon the prudential case, and like a wife and sagacious man. Import. of the Doctr. of the Tris. p. 378.

more affecting, he says, at that time, than any dispute from the bare letter of the Scripture could be [1].

Here then we see in short, the origin and history of tradition. *Papias, a weak and silly man*, who mistook the sense of the Apostles, was the first, who made it his particular business to recommend the use of it, and for that purpose took the pains to collect all the unwritten facts and sayings of Christ and his Apostles, from the report of those, who had conversed with them. These sayings, as *Eusebius* tells us, consisted of a number of *strange parables, and doctrines of our Saviour, with several other fabulous stories*; which the authority of so venerable a person, who had lived with the Apostles, imposed upon the Church for genuine [2]: and the gravity of his scholar *Irenæus*

con-

[1] Ibid. p. 380. Not. y.

[2] Καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς συγγραφεὺς, ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφει, εἰς αὐτὸν ἡκούσα παραλήθειαι, ξέναις τε τινὰς παραβολαῖς τῷ Σωτῆρι καὶ διδασκαλίαις αὐτοῦ, καὶ τινὰ ἄλλα μυθικώτερα. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 39.

N. B. Nothing more effectually demonstrates the uncertainty of all tradition, than what is delivered to us by Antiquity, concerning this very *Papias*. *Irenæus* declares him, to have been the companion of *Polycarp*, and the Disciple of *St. John* the Apostle. [l. 5. c. 33.] But *Eusebius* tells us, that he was not a disciple of *John* the Apostle, but of *John*, called the Elder or Presbyter, who was a companion onely of the Apostles: and whom *Irenæus* by mistake imagined to be the Apostle. [Hist. l. 3. 38.] Now *Irenæus* might probably be born while *St. John* was still living, and had conversed very familiarly in his youth with *Polycarp*, the disciple of that Apostle, and declares, that he retained the memory of all things which he had learnt from him, more

distinctly, than of things, which had happened to him much later. [Euseb. 5. 20.] He was well acquainted also with *Papias*, whom he calls an ancient man: which makes it seem probable, both that *Papias* was contemporary with the Apostle *John*, and that *Irenæus* could not be mistaken in his account of *Papias*'s master, which he might have received from *Papias* himself: and for this reason the generality of the modern writers prefer the authority of *Irenæus* to that of *Eusebius*, who lived two hundred years later. Yet after all, it is evident, from the express words of *Papias*, as they are cited by *Eusebius*, that *Papias* had never personally heard or known any of the Apostles, but received his reports of them onely from those, who had: and that *Irenæus* therefore was deceived by the identity of the name, and had never heard perhaps of that other *John*, called the Presbyter; who is supposed by some of the principal Fathers, to have written the second and third Epistles, as well as the book

confirmed and propagated to succeeding ages: through which, every one still added to the collection, whatever he thought useful to the particular cause or opinion, that he favored. This account of the matter, deduced from the testimony of antiquity itself, confutes at once all the extravagant encomiums, which our leading Divines so lavishly bestow on those primitive Fathers, and their traditions. For if the earliest and best vouched traditions of all, which are transmitted to us, be true, or at all to be regarded, it follows of course, that we ought to receive the absurd doctrines abovementioned, as articles of faith; *the fable of the Millennium; of Angels begetting Dæmons on the bodies of women; of the old age of Christ, of Ænoch translated into Adam's paradise;* with many more of the same stamp; which were all embraced by the earliest Fathers, and delivered to us, on the authority of the Apostles, by some of their immediate Successors; and especially by those four, on whom Dr. Waterland lays the greatest stress; *Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenæus and Clemens of Alexandria;* “ eminent personages, as he “ says, who flourished within fifty, sixty, or at most ninety “ years from the Apostolic age. Whose nearness to the time; “ known fidelity; admirable endowments ordinary and extra- “ ordinary, add great weight to their testimony or doctrine, “ and make it a probable rule of interpretation in the prime “ things [1].” To which he subjoins in a marginal note, “ that *Clemens*, tho’ the latest of the four, yet testifies of him- “ self, that he had received his doctrine from several disciples

of *Revelations*, now ascribed to the Apostle. [Euseb. Hist. 3. 38. Hieron. Catalog. Scriptor. de Joan. Apost. & Papia.] The learned Mr. Dodwell therefore declares it to be certain, that *John, the Master of Papias*, was a different man from the Apostle; and consequently that *Irenæus himself*, and

Polycrates his contemporary, and Clemens Alexandrinus also, who was but a little younger, were all mistaken, with regard to this fact. Dissert. in Iren. 1. § 14.

[1] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 369.

“ of

“ of the very chief Apostles; who had truly preserved the tradition of the blessed doctrine, as it came directly from the holy Apostles, *Peter, James, and John.*” Notwithstanding all which, the Doctor could not but know, that this very *Clemens* holds as many absurd, unsound, and exploded doctrines, and deals as largely in the fabulous and apocryphal books of the primitive Christians, as any other Father whatsoever. These facts shew likewise the weakness of that argument, which the Doctor alledges for the truth of doctrines, from *the unanimity*, with which they are asserted by the antient writers. “ This is the argument,” says he, which *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* insist much upon and triumph in, over the Hæretics of their days—for it is highly unreasonable to suppose, that Churches distant in place, and of different languages, and under no common visible head, should all unite in the same errors—Again, such unanimity could never come by chance, but must be derived from one common source: and therefore the harmony of their doctrine was in itself a pregnant argument of the truth of it [1].” But if the unanimity of the primitive Fathers must be allowed to have so great a force, as to evince the truth of any opinion, it would necessarily establish all those monstrous doctrines above specified; since it would be difficult to produce any other whatsoever, in which there was so great an harmony among them, or so general a consent of the whole Church, through the three first centuries, and that intirely grounded upon the pretence of Apostolic tradition.

But I cannot dismiss this article of the doctrines and opinions of these antient Fathers, without taking notice of one, which was universally received and believed through all ages of the primitive Church, *viz.* “ that there were a number of

[1] Ibid. p. 372, 3.

“ Magicians, Necromancers or Conjurers, both among the
 “ Gentiles and the Hæretical Christians, who had each their
 “ particular Dæmons or evil Spirits, for their associates, per-
 “ petually attending on their persons, and obsequious to their
 “ commands; by whose help they could perform miracles,
 “ foretell future events, call up the Souls of the dead, exhibit
 “ them to open view, and infuse into People whatever dreams
 “ or visions they thought fit.” — All which is constantly
 affirmed by the Primitive Writers and Apologists, and com-
 monly applied by them to prove the immortality of the Soul.

“ Let the powers of Necromancy, says *Justin Martyr*, and
 “ the evocations of human Souls, and of boys especially who
 “ had suffered violent deaths, and of those Spirits, whom the
 “ Magicians call the Inspirers of dreams and assessors, and the
 “ works, which are performed by the skillful in these arts,
 “ convince you, that the souls of men exist still after death
 “ [1].”

Lactantius, speaking of certain Philosophers, who held,
 that the soul perished with the body, says, “ they durst not have
 “ declared such an opinion, in the presence of any Magician,
 “ or if they had done it, he would have confuted them upon
 “ the spot, by sensible experiments; by calling up souls from
 “ the dead, and rendring them visible to human eyes, and
 “ making them speak and foretell future events [2].”

The Author of the book, called, the *Recognition of St. Cle-
 mens*, one of the most antient and most learned of those many
 spurious pieces, which were forged by the first Christians,
 affirms, “ that *Simon Magus* confessed to one of his compa-

[1] Apol. 1. p. 27. Edit. Thirlb.

[2] Qui profecto non auderent de inte-
 ritu animarum Mago aliquo præfente dif-

ferere, qui sciret certis carminibus eiere
 ab Inferis animas, &c. *Divin. Institut. l.*
7. c. 13.

“ nions, that he wrought all his amazing works, by the help
“ of the Soul of an healthy young boy, who had been vio-
“ lently put to death for that purpose, and then called up from
“ the dead, by ineffable adjurations, and compelled to be his
“ assistant [1].”

Irenæus, giving an account of the disciples of the same *Simon*, tells us, “ that they lived lewdly, exercising magical arts, and
“ using exorcisms, incantations, and love-charms, and indus-
“ triously practising all other curious arts, by the assistance of
“ their familiar Spirits and Inspirers of dreams [2].” And speaking afterwards of the Hæretic *Carpocrates* and his followers, he says, “ These likewise practise magical arts, with
“ incantations and love-charms, and have their assistant Dæ-
“ mons and Inspirers of dreams, with all the other malevolent
“ Spirits [3].”

“ The Magicians, says *Clemens of Alexandria*, boast of Dæ-
“ mons, as the Ministers of their impiety, reckoning them
“ part of their family, and forcing them by their incantations,
“ to be the slaves of their will [4].”

Tertullian declares of these Dæmons, “ that they had the
“ power of inflicting horrible diseases both on the minds and
“ bodies of men, and even cruel deaths; yet they frequently
“ contrived to cure the disorders which they had wrought, in
“ order to support the credit of their divinity, and the honor

[1] Pueri, inquit, incorrupti & violentè necati animam adjuramentis ineffabilibus evocatum adfuisse mihi feci, & per ipsam sit omne quod jubeo. lib. 2. c. xiiii. Edit. Cotelerii.

[2] Igitur horum Mystici Sacerdotes libidinose quidem vivunt; Magias autem perficiunt—exorcismus & incantationibus utuntur, &c. Adv. Hæref. l. 1. c. xx.

[3] Artes etiam Magicas operantur & ipsi, & incantationes & philtrea. Quoque & charitesia, & paredros, & oneirepompos & reliquas malignationes, &c.—ib. c. xxix.

[4] Μάγοι δὲ ἡδὴ ἀσεβείας τῆς σφῶν αὐτῶν ἰσχυρίσας δαίμονας αὐχῶσιν. &c. Cohort. ad Gent. p. 52. Edit. Potter.

“ of their Altars, and secure to themselves their proper food
 “ and nourishment from the rich steams and blood of the
 “ victims, which were offered to them [1].” For this like-
 wise, as monstrous as it is, was the common opinion of all
 the Fathers, taken, as usual, upon trust, from the authority
 of *Justin Martyr*, who was probably the inventor of it, “ that
 “ the Dæmons, after they had given themselves up to their
 “ lusts and lewd debaucheries with boys and women, began to
 “ want the rich fumes and the fat of sacrifices, to strengthen
 “ them for the enjoyment of their lustfull pleasures [2].”

Cyprian affirms, “ that they commonly lay lurking within
 “ the statues and images of the Heathen Deities; inspired the
 “ breasts of the Southsayers; animated the fibres of the entrails
 “ of victims; directed the flight of birds, and the chances of
 “ lots; involving falsehood always with truth, and them-
 “ selves sometimes deceived, as well as deceiving others; dis-
 “ quieted the lives of men; disturbed their sleep; excited ter-
 “ rors in their minds, convulsions in their bodies; destroyed
 “ health, and brought on diseases, so as to force people to
 “ worship them; that being filled and fatted by the steams of
 “ Altars and burnt sacrifices, they might seem to cure the
 “ maladies, which they had inflicted; whereas all the cure,
 “ which they performed, was by ceasing onely to do hurt [3].”

[1] Itaque corporibus quidem & valetudines infligunt, & aliquos casus acerbos; animæ vero repentinos, & extraordinarios per vim excessus.—Ut sibi pabula propria nidoris & sanguinis procuret—Benefici plane & circa curas valetudinum. Lædunt enim primo, dehinc remedia præcipiunt. Apologet. c. 22. Pluribus notum est Dæmoniorum quoque opera & immaturas &

atroces effici mortes.—De Anim. c. 57.

[2] Ὅν ἐνδεῖς γυγνάσκει μὲν τὸ πάθει-
 σιν ἐπιθυμιῶν δαλωθῆναι, &c. Apol. p.
 113. Edit. Thirlb.

[3] Hi ergo Spiritus sub statuis & ima-
 ginibus consecratis delitescunt. Hi afflatu
 suo Vatum pectora inspirant, &c. De Idol.
 Van. p. 206.

And as the whole system of Pagan Idolatry was believed by the Fathers, to have been managed by the craft and agency of Dæmons, so the whole art of Magic was supposed also to be carried on by the same powers, for the sake of deluding and destroying mankind. In the case of idolatry, they imagined them to assume the names, and to act the parts of the Heathen Gods, and in Magic to assume the forms of departed souls, and to appear under the names of those, who were called up from the dead; and as such, to foretell future events, and answer to all quæstions, which should be demanded of them. And the reason which they give, why the souls called up from the dead, were chiefly of those, who had been put to a violent death, is, because such spirits were generally thought to be the most malevolent and revengeful, and ready to perpetrate the same acts of violence on others, which they themselves had injuriously suffered [1].

Now the opinion, which I have here explained, is not only a proof of the grossest credulity, but of that peculiar species of it, which, of all others, lays a man the most open to the delusive arts of Impostors. For a mind, so totally possessed by superstitious fancies, and disturbed by vain terrors, could not have either the judgement to discern, or the inclination to examine, or the courage even to suspect the pretensions of those vagrant Jugglers, who, in those primitive ages, were so numerous, and so industriously employed in the affair of deluding their fellow creatures. Every man will perceive, how easy it must have been to men of that class, whether Heathens, Jews, or Christians, (for they are all allowed to have had such Impof-

[1] Itaque invocantur quidem aori & Bixiothanati, sub illo fidei argumento, quod credibile videatur, eas potissimum animas ad vim & injuriam facere, quas per vim &

injuriam sævus & immaturus finis extorfit, quasi ad vicem offensæ. Tert. de anim. c. 57. Cypr. ib. 206.

tors among them) to impose the tricks of their art, as the effects of a supernatural power, on a multitude already persuaded, that they lived on magic ground, exposed at every step to snares and charms, contrived by malicious Spirits, perpetually haunting them, and watching every unguarded moment, to get possession both of their souls and bodies [1]. And when pious Christians are arrived to this pitch of credulity, as to believe, that evil spirits or evil men can work real miracles, in defiance and opposition to the authority of the Gospel, their very piety will oblige them, to admit as miraculous, whatever is pretended to be wrought in the defence of it, and so make them of course the implicit dupes of their own wonder-workers.

IV. I shall now procede, as I proposed, to take a particular review of all the several gifts, or miraculous powers, which were actually claimed, and pretended to have been possessed by the primitive Church: which, according to the testimonies produced above, were, *the power of raising the dead; of healing the sick; of casting out Devils; of prophesying; of seeing visions; of discovering the secrets of men; of expounding the scriptures; of speaking with tongues.*

Sect. 1. As to the first, and the principal indeed of all miracles, that of raising the dead; it was frequently performed, as *Irenæus* affirms, *on necessary occasions; and men so raised had lived afterwards among them many years;* but it is very strange, that from the time of the Apostles, there is not an Instance of this miracle to be found in the three first centuries; except a single case, slightly intimated by *Eusebius*, from the books of

[1] Nam & suggestimus nullum ~~pene~~ hominem carere Dæmonio. Tert. ib.

Papias; which he seems to rank, among the other fabulous stories delivered by that weak man [1].

It is certain, that if a miracle of so surprizing a nature, had been so frequent, as *Irenæus* affirms it to have been; or performed, as it were, in every parish, or place where there was a Christian Church, it must have made great noise in the world, and been celebrated, not onely by the primitive Fathers, but by all the Historians of those times. But it was so far from being commonly or openly effected, as every miracle should necessarily be, which is wrought for the conversion of Infidels, that all the enemies of the Gospel, as *Irenæus* himself confesses, constantly affirmed *the thing itself to be impossible* [2]. A sure proof, that they had never seen or known it to be done, unless in such a manner, as carried with it a strong suspicion of fraud or collusion. Mr. *Dodwell* however, from this single authority of *Irenæus*, asserts the miraculous powers of the second century, to be superior even to those of the first, or Apostolic age. *They raised the dead*, says he, *in the Apostolic Churches; yet we have few examples of it, in the genuin acts of the Apostles: but in Irenæus's days, they raised not a few, but very often* [3]. And in the same strain he runs through all the other miracles of the primitive times, and gives them the preference, in their number at least, to those of the Apostles; yet is forced to own, after all, that towards the end of the second century, and while *Irenæus* himself might be still living, this power of raising the dead was lost and vanished. For in the very same age, when one *Auto-*

[1] Νεκρῷ γὰρ ἀνάστασιν, καὶ αὐτὸν γέγονυιαν ἰσορεῖ. καὶ αὐτὸν πάλιν ἕτερον παράδοξον περὶ Ἰεζον, &c. Hist. Eccl. 3. 39.

[2] Tantum enim absunt ab eo, ut mortuum ipsi excitent, ut ne quidem credant, hoc in totum posse fieri. Iren. l. 2. c. 56.

[3] Excitabant mortuos in Ecclesiis Apostolicis, quos tamen raros legimus,—excitabant similiter mortuos *fraternitates Irenæi*.—nec illos tamen adeo raros sed sæpissime. Dissert. 2. in Iren. § XLII. p.

lycus, an eminent heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, Bishop of *Antioch*, a convert and champion of the Gospel, to shew him but one person, who had been raised from the dead, on the condition of turning Christian himself upon it; *Theophilus* discovers by his answer, that he was not able to give him that satisfaction [1]. Upon which Mr. *Dodwell* remarks, that the great number of persons, who had been raised some years before, when the fact was common, were dead again for the second time in this interval; which, for the sake of his hypothesis, he stretches, as well as he can, to forty years [2]. But in truth, the fact itself, as delivered by *Irenæus*, seems to be utterly incredible on many accounts: 1st, that a case of so wonderful a nature, should be common among them, yet not a single instance of it particularly described, or clearly attested in all history. 2dly, That it should be performed in every part of the world, where there was a Church or assembly of Christians; yet all those, who were not of the Church, and for whose sake it was chiefly performed, should be insisting all the while, that the thing itself was impossible. 3dly, That it should be common in the days of *Irenæus*, yet *Theophilus*, who lived at the same time, should not be able to alledge a single instance of it, when challenged to it by his friend, whom he was laboring to convert, and who offered to be converted upon the proof of that fact. Lastly, that a power, of all others, the most affecting and reputable to the Church, should be withdrawn at a time, when it's adversaries were defying them to shew any effects of it, and putting the merits

[1] Φησὶ γὰρ, δείξόν μοι καὶ ἓνα ἐγερθὲν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἵνα ἰδὼν πιστώσω, &c. *Theoph.* ad *Autol.* l. 1. p. 77. c. Ad finem Oper. *Iust. Mart.* Paris. 1639. De fecere item *martuorum excitaciones*. Certe *Autolyco* roganti vel unum ostenderet qui fuisset e mortuis revocatus, ita respondit

Theophilus, quasi vel unum demonstrare minime potuerit. Dissert. in *Iren.* 2. § XLIV. p. 171.

[2] Quo temporis intervallo rursus obierint, qui sub initium *Marci Aurelii* fuissent in vitam revocati, *ibid.*

of the controversy upon that very issue [1]. All which circumstances laid together, must needs leave the strongest suspicion on the claim of the primitive Church, with regard to this prime miracle of *raising the dead*.

SECT. 2. The next gift said to have resided in it, is that of *healing the sick and curing all sorts of diseases*: in favor of which the ancient testimonies are more full and express; tho' with some variation, concerning the method of cure. Some affirm, that it was done by *the imposition of hands* [2]: some, by *invoking the name of God, and of Jesus, and reciting some story of his life* [3]. And others, by the use of *oil*: which was consecrated by Holy men, and dispensed to the people for the cure of their diseases. *Tertullian* tells us, "that a Christian called *Proculus* cured the Emperor *Severus* of a certain distemper by the use of oil: for which service that Emperor was favorable afterwards to the Christians, and kept *Proculus*, as long as he lived, in his palace [4]." And *St. Jerom* affirms, "that *Hilarion the Monk* used to heal all the wounds of the Husbandmen and Shepherds with *consecrated oil*: and preserved the life of the son-in-law and daughter of an holy woman called *Constantia*, by anointing them with the same [5]." Yet these cures, if true, might

[1] This shews the vanity of that distinction, which some are apt to make, between the primitive, and the Popish miracles; that the first were wrought for the sake, and in the midst of unbelievers; the last among the faithful onely. Contra, recentiorum pleraque in *fideles*; in infideles paucissima, edita feruntur. *Dodw. ib. § LXIII.*

[2] Ἄλλοι δὲ τὰς κάμνοντας διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν ἰκύναι. *Iren. l. 2. c. 57.*

[3] Οὐδὲν ἄλλο καλῶντες ἐπὶ τὰς δεινὰς θεραπεΐας, ἢ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεόν, καὶ τὸ τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὄνομα, μὲν τῆς περὶ αὐτῆς ἱστορίας. *Con. Cels. l. 3. p. 124.*

[4] Ipse etiam *Severus*,—Christianorum memor fuit. Nam & *Proculus* Christianum, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requisivit, & in palatio suo habuit usque ad mortem ejus. *Ad Scapul. § 4.*

[5] *Benedixit itaque oleo*, universi agricolæ atque pastores, tangentes vulnera, certam

might be accounted for probably without a miracle, by the natural power and efficacy of the oil itself, since in our days, the bite of vipers, after inflaming a man's arm to a degree, which threatened destruction to him, is known to have been checked and cured in a short time by the application of oil: which might perhaps have been the very case of *Hilarion's Shepherds*. But be that as it will, the pretence of curing diseases by a miraculous power, was so successfully maintained in the heathen world by fraud and craft, that when it came to be challenged by the Christians, it was not capable of exciting any attention to it, among those, who themselves pretended to the same power; which, tho' the certain effect of imposture, was yet managed with so much art, that the Christians could neither deny nor detect it; but insisted always, that it was performed by *Dæmons* or evil Spirits, deluding mankind to their ruin: and from the supposed reality of the fact, inferred the reasonableness of believing, what was more credibly affirmed by the Christians, to be performed by the power of the true God. *We do not deny*, says *Athenagoras*, *that in different places, cities, and countries, there are some extraordinary works performed in the name of idols, from which some have received benefit, others harm.* But then he goes on to prove, that they were not performed by God, but by *Dæmons* [1]. "If I should allow, says *Origen*, "that there is a *Dæmon* cunning in medicine, called *Æsculapius*, who cures diseases: yet I would say to those, who are "surprized at it, as well as at the predictions of *Apollo*, that if "the cure of diseases and prædiction of events be things of an

certam salutem resumebant. Hieron. in Vit. Hilarion. Oper. Tom. 4. Par. 2. p. 86.

Sed & *Constantia* quædam, sancta femina, cujus generum & filiam de morte liberaverat unctione olei. ibid. p. 90.

[1] Το μὲν δὲ κατὰ τὸν τρόπον τῆς πόλεως καὶ τοῦ τοῦ γένους τινος ἐπ' ὀνόματι εἰδώλων ἐνεργείας, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀντιλαμβάνομεν. Athenag. Apol. p. 25.

"indif-

“ indifferent nature, and which belong to bad, as well as to
 “ good beings; shew me that those, who cure and foretell;
 “ are not bad, but good, and worthy to be held in a manner
 “ as Gods [1].

Whatever proof then the Primitive Church might have among themselves of this miraculous gift, yet it could have but little effect towards making proselytes among those, who pretended to the same gift; possessed more largely, and exerted more openly, than in the private assemblies of the Christians. For in the Temples of *Æsculapius*, all kinds of diseases were believed to be publicly cured, by the pretended help of that Deity: in proof of which there were erected in each Temple columns or tables of brass or marble, on which a distinct narrative of each particular cure was inscribed. *Pausanias* writes, “ that
 “ in the Temple at *Epidaurus*, there were many columns an-
 “ tiently of this kind, and six of them remaining to his time,
 “ inscribed with the names of men and women, who had been
 “ cured by the God, with an account of their several cases, and
 “ the method of their cure: and that there was an old pillar
 “ besides, which stood apart, dedicated to the memory of
 “ *Hippolytus*, who had been raised from the dead [2].” *Strabo* also, another grave writer, informs us, “ that these Temples
 “ were constantly filled with the sick, imploring the help of
 “ the God: and that they had tables hanging around them,
 “ in which all the miraculous cures were described [3].” There is a remarkable fragment of one of these tables still extant, and

[1] ἵνα δὲ καὶ δῶ, ἱερικόν τινα Δαί-
 μονα θεραπεύειν σώματα, τὸν καλύμενον
 Ἀσκληπιόν. εἰποιμ' ἂν πρὸς τὰς θαυμα-
 ζούσας τὸ τοιοῦτο. &c. *Con. Celf.* l. 3. p.
 124.

[2] Στῆλαι δ' ἐστίωνσαν ἐπὶ τῷ περι-
 βάλῳ, τὸ μὲν ἀρχαῖον καὶ πλείους, ἐπ'

ἐμῇ δὲ ἐξ λοιπαί. &c. *Corinth.* l. 2. c.
 xxvii.

[3] Καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν πλήρες ἔχοντι αἱ
 τῶν τε καμνύλων, καὶ τῶν ἀνακειμένων πι-
 νάκων, ἐν οἷς ἀναγεγραμμένω τυγχάνουσι
 αἱ θεραπεῖαι. *Strab.* l. 8. p. 575. Edit.
 Amstel.

exhibited by Gruter in his collection, as it was found in the ruins of *Æsculapius's Temple, in the island of the Tyber, in Rome;* which gives an account of *two blind men restored to sight by Æsculapius, in the open view, and with the loud acclamations of the people, acknowledging the manifest power of the God.* Upon which the learned *Montfaucon* makes this reflection, that *in this are seen, either the wiles of the Devil, or the tricks of Pagan Priests, suborning men to counterfeit diseases and miraculous cures* [1].

Now tho' nothing can support the belief and credit of miracles more authentically, than publick monuments, erected in proof and memory of them, at the time when they were performed; yet in defiance of that authority, it is certain, that all those heathen miracles were pure forgeries contrived to delude the credulous multitude. And in truth; this particular claim of *curing diseases miraculously*, affords great room for such a delusion, and a wide field for the exercise of craft. Every man's experience has taught him, that diseases thought fatal and desperate, are often surprizingly healed of themselves, by some secret and sudden effort of nature, impenetrable to the skill of man: but to ascribe this presently to a miracle, as weak and superstitious minds are apt to do; to the prayers of the living, or the intercessions of the dead; is what neither sound reason, nor true religion will justify. Wherefore when the narratives of these pretended cures are delivered to us by partial and interested, or by weak and credulous men, they will always furnish reason to suspect, that the relators were either deluded themselves, or willing to delude others: and unless we know more precisely in this case the real bounds between nature and miracle, we cannot pay any great regard to such stories; especially when we are informed at the same time by the Chris-

[1] See *Montfaucon. Antiqu. Tom. 2. par. 1. l. 4. c. 6. it. Gruter. Inscr. p. LXXI.*

tians themselves, that the same cures were performed also by Knaves and Impostors, of all sects and nations; by *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Heretics*; which according to the principles of those days, were ascribed either to the power of *Dæmons*, or to the magical force of amulets and charms.

Sect. 3. But the most eminent and celebrated of all the miraculous powers of the primitive Church was, the gift of *casting out Devils*, or the cure of *Dæmoniacs*. To this the anti-ent Fathers and Apologists make the most frequent appeals; and on this they lay the greatest stress, towards evincing the divinity of the Christian Religion. It is not easy however to collect from their accounts, what was the real case of these *Dæmoniacs*, and the proper nature of their malady. The Fathers indeed themselves seem to have been fully persuaded, and labor to persuade every body else, that they were actually possessed and tormented by Devils, or evil Spirits: yet many learned men of modern times have imagined them rather to have been affected by the *Epilepsy*, or *falling sickness*. Mr. *Dodwell* himself takes their case to have been of this kind, and curable by the ordinary way of medicine, as well as the extraordinary one of miracle [1]. And it is certain, that the effects constantly ascribed to it, seem to be nothing else but the ordinary symptoms of an *Epilepsy*, as they are described by the Physicians. *Justin* speaks of them as being thrown down always to the ground, by the Devils who possessed them [2]. And *Cbryostom*,

[1] Morbum itaque caducum, quem Comitalem seu Regium appellant, curabant passim exorcismis suis coævi *Tertuliano* Christiani. Nec enim ego alium censuerim, quo laborarint *Dæmoni* illi a *Dæmone præcipitati*. — Nihil enim impedit, quo minus iidem per medicinam pos-

sint etiam curari—Dissert. in Iren. 2. § XLVII. p. 175.

[2] Καὶ οἱ ψυχαῖς ἀποθανόντων λαμβανόμενοι καὶ ῥιπτόμενοι ἀνθρώποι, ἕς δαιμονολήπτης καὶ μαινομένους καλῶσι πάντες. *Apol.* i. p. 28.

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in his elaborate consolation to *Stagirus*, who was also possessed, recites all the particulars of his case, as they were related to him by a common friend; *the convulsion of his hands, the distortion of his eyes, the foam of his mouth, his horrid and inarticulate voice, the tremor of his body, and the long privation of his senses* [1]. *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, speaking of a woman also in the same case, says, *that groaning with a terrible and inarticulate voice, different from human, she fell flat on the ground, tearing her hair, her eyes distorted, her mouth foaming: nor did the Devil desist from strangling her, &c.* [2] Then as to what these Fathers declare, concerning their power of *lashing, burning and tormenting* the Devils; and of their *groaning and howling* under the torture of the Christian exorcism, such an imagination might easily be conceived, from the strange convulsions of the body, and the hollow sighs and groans which commonly attend such fits. And the other circumstances likewise, so constantly attested by them all, concerning *the speeches and confessions of the Devils; their answering to all questions; owning themselves to be wicked spirits; telling whence they came, and whither they were going, and pleading for favor and ease from the hands of the Exorcists*, may not improbably be accounted for, either by the disordered state of the patient, answering wildly and at random to any questions proposed, or by the arts of imposture and contrivance between the Parties concerned in the act.

[1] Τὴν σείβλωσιν τῶν χειρῶν, τὴν διαστροφὴν τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀφρόν, &c. Tom. 1. p. 156. E. Edit. Benedict.

Ita etiam *Plinius*, corruens morbo comitiali. [Hist. N. 28. 6.] atque ita quoque *S. Cyprianus*—irrepentes in corporibus occulte, mentes terrent, membra distor-

quent, valetudinem frangunt, &c. De Idolol. Van. p. 206.

[2] Πνεύματι δαιμονίῳ σείβλωθεῖσα, καὶ βρυχηθμῶ θηριώδει παρὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φωνὴν ἀνομιάζασα, πίπτει πρηνὴς, &c. in Vit. Greg. Thaum. p. 973. B. Oper. Edit. Paris.

This, I dare say, will appear probable to every impartial reader, who, from the credulous and enthusiastic disposition of these Fathers, and their preconceived and erroneous notions about the origin and power of Dæmons, will be apt to conclude, that they were either induced by their prejudices, to give too hasty a credit to these pretended Possessions; or carried away by their zeal, to assist even in supporting a delusion, which was useful to the Christian cause. And tho' this may sound harsh in the ears of many, it will not appear strange to those, who have given any attention to the history of mankind; which will always suggest this sad reflection; that the greatest zealots in religion; or the leaders of sects and parties, whatever purity or principles they pretend to, have seldom scrupled to make use of a commodious lie, for the advancement, of what they call the truth. And with regard to these very Fathers, there is not one of them, as an eminent writer of ecclesiastical history declares, who made any scruple in those ages, of using *the hyperbolical style*, to advance the honor of God, and the salvation of men [1]. For it is certain, that the greatest part of the wonderfull things, which they relate, are in themselves utterly incredible; and such of them as happen to be the most distinctly described, carry always the greatest marks of art and contrivance, for the sake of serving some particular purpose. For example, *Tertullian*, who was an utter enemy to plays and public shews in the Theaters, wrote a book, to deter all Christians from frequenting them, in which he tells the following story: " An example happened, says he, as the Lord is witness, of a woman, who went to the Theater, and came back with a Devil in her: whereupon when the unclean

[1] In honorem Dei, salutemque hominum, hyperbolica oratione uti, nemo tunc temporis religioni ducebat. Jo. Cleric, Hist. Eccles. p. 681.

“ spirit was urged and threatened in the office of exorcising,
 “ for having dared to attack one of the faithfull; *I have done*
 “ *nothing*, replied he, *but what is very fair, for I found her on*
 “ *my own ground.*” He adds a second story still more dreadful,
 “ of another woman, who, in the very night, after she had
 “ seen a tragedy in the Theater, had her winding-sheet shewn
 “ to her in a vision, in which she was reproached by name,
 “ with the Tragedian, whom she had been seeing, and did
 “ not live above five days after [1].”

Now in this last case, it is not improbable, that a poor weak woman, who went to sleep, under the consciousness of a grievous sin committed by her, might, by the terrors of a dream, be thrown into a disorder, that put an end to her life. But in the first, tho’ God himself is appealed to, for the truth of it, yet when we reflect on the principles of those times, and the particular warmth of *Tertullian’s* zeal, we cannot but suspect, that the smart answer of the Devil, was contrived to enforce, what he was so warmly inculcating, the horrible sin and dangerous consequence of frequenting the public Theaters.

It is very remarkable, that all the Fathers, who lay so great a stress on this particular gift of casting out Devils, yet allow the same power both to the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, as well before, as after our Saviour’s coming. *Justin Martyr*, in his dialogue with *Trypho* the *Jew*, says, “ that all Devils yield and
 “ submit to the name of *Jesus*, when they would not, to any
 “ other name of their Kings, Prophets or Patriarchs: yet if
 “ any should exorcise them in the name of the God of *Abra-*
 “ *ham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, they would in like manner submit.

[1] Nam & exemplum accidit Domino teste, ejus mulieris, quæ theatrum adiit, & inde cum Dæmonio rediit. Itaque in exorcismo, cum oneraretur immundus spi-

ritus, quod ausus esset fidelem adgredi; constanter & justissime quidem, inquit, feci, in meo eam inveni, &c.—De Spectac. 26.

" For your Exorcists, adds he, as well as the Gentiles, use
" this art in exorcising, together with certain fumes, and liga-
" tures [1]." And the *Jews*, says *Irenæus*, even now, by this
same invocation of the name of God, drive away Devils [2].

Origen, in his dispute with *Celsus*, asserting the descent of
the *Jews* from *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, says, " that those
" names joined to that of God, have such power, that not
" onely their own nation use them in their prayers, and
" in casting out Devils, but all other Inchanters and Magi-
" cians whatsoever: and that in magical books, the same
" invocation and use of God's name is often found, as pecu-
" liar to the art, and effectual against Devils [3]." And
speaking of *Abraham's* great merit, he observes, " that it is
" not *Moses* onely, who celebrates it, but that many of those,
" who charm or drive out Devils, call upon the God of *Abra-
" ham*, without knowing even who *Abraham* was [4]." Again,
" if a man, says he, invoke or exorcise by the name of the
" God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, the Devils will obey,
" and do what they are commanded; but if he translate those
" names, according to their meaning, into any other lan-
" guage, they will have no force at all. The same, adds he,
" is true of the word, *Sabaoth*, so much used in incantations:
" if it be applied in it's original *Hebrew*, it is effectual: but
" if translated into another tongue, so as to put for it, *the*

[1] "Ἦδη μίλλοι οἱ ἐξ ὑμῶν ἱποκριταὶ
τῇ τέχνῃ ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἴθνη χρωμένοι ἐξορ-
κίζουσιν καὶ θυμιάμασιν καὶ καλαδίσμοις χρω-
ταί. Dial. par. 2. p. 321.

[2] Et propter hoc Judæi usque nunc
hac ipsa adfatione Dæmonas effugant.—1.
2. c. 5. p. 123.

[3] "Ὡν τοσούτων δύναται τὰ ὀνόματα

συναπτόμενα τῇ τῷ Θεῷ προσηγορίᾳ, ὥς
ὃ μόνον τὰς ἀπὸ τῷ ἔθνει χρησθῆναι ἐν ταῖς
πρὸς Θεὸν εὐχαῖς, καὶ ἐν τῷ κατεπαθεῖν
δαίμονας, &c. Con. Cels. l. 4. p. 183, 84.

[4] Διὸ παραλαμβάνεις τὴν, Θεὸς Ἀ-
βραάμ, λέξιν, ἣν ἐπιστάμενοι οἱ τίς ἐστιν
ὁ Ἀβραάμ. ib. l. 1. p. 17.

“ *Lord of Hosts*, it avails nothing, if we believe the skillfull
“ in these matters [1].”

Josephus writes, “ that *Solomon* was particularly instructed by
“ God in the art of casting out Devils, for the benefit of man-
“ kind; and that he left behind him a receipt of those charms
“ and exorcisms, by which he used to drive them out: which
“ same method was the most effectual even to his time. For
“ I saw, says he, one of my countrymen, *Eleazar*, casting
“ out Devils, in the presence of *Vespasian*, his sons and offi-
“ cers, and a multitude of soldiers. His method was this:
“ he applied to the nose of a person possessed, a ring, which
“ had a certain drug or root under the seal of it, which *Solomon*
“ had prescribed; and so, by the smell of the ring, he drew
“ out the Devil, through the nostrils of the patient; who fell
“ presently to the ground; upon which, he adjured the Devil
“ never to return, rehearsing the name of *Solomon*, with cer-
“ tain charms, which he had composed and left behind him;
“ and being desirous to convince the company, that he was really
“ indued with this power, to which he pretended, he placed
“ a certain cup or vessel filled with water, at a little distance
“ from the person possessed, and commanded the Devil, as
“ he was going out of him, to overturn the cup, so as to give
“ the spectators a manifest proof, that he had quitted the

[1] Τὸ δὲ ὁμοίον ἔραμεν καὶ περὶ τῆς
Σαβαὶθ φωνῆς πολλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τῶν πα-
ραλαμβανομένων. ὅτι εἰ μέγα λαμβάνομεν
τὸ ὄνομα εἰς τὸ, κύριον τῶν δυνάμεων.—
ὡς δὲν ποιήσομεν. ib. l. 5. p. 262.

N. B. From what is here said by *Ori-
gen*, and the other Fathers, it appears;
that the power of casting out Devils, was
considered as a peculiar gift, or art rather,
grounded on certain rules, which were
taught and delivered in books; and was

common both to the Jews and the Hea-
thens, as well as to the Christians; and,
among them all, was administered by a
particular set of men, called *Exorcists*:
who about the time of *Origen's* death, or
the middle of the third Century, began
to be reckoned among the inferior orders
of the Church: [Vid. *Euseb.* l. 6. c. 43.]
The form of whose ordination is given us
by the learned *Bingham*: [Antiqu. lib. 3.
c. 4. § 5.]

"body of the man [1]." Which shews, in contradiction to what *Justin Martyr* affirmed above, that besides the name of *Jesus*, the Devils were subject likewise to that of *Solomon*.

Now it will be granted, I suppose, by all men of sense, that these *Jewish* and *Gentile Exorcists* were mere *Knaves* and *Impostors*; who, by their tricks and false miracles, contrived to delude the credulous multitude, in order to acquire gain or power to themselves, and to keep their people firm to the *Jewish* or *Heathenish* rites, in opposition to the *Christian*. *Ulpian* the lawyer speaks of *Exorcism* in general, as a term of art used by *Impostors*: by whom he is supposed by some, to mean the *Jewish*, by others, the *Christian Exorcists* [2]. But *Tertullian*, and all the *Fathers* in general declare, that these *Magicians* and wandering *Jugglers* performed many wonderfull things, above the force of human power, which they wholly ascribe to the assistance of *Dæmons*. And if they were so far deluded by those *Jewish* and *Gentile* pretenders, as to take such senseless charms, and tricks of legerdemain, for the effects of a supernatural power, their prejudices would operate much more strongly in favor of their own *Impostors*, who had taken up the same trade: or if they saw through the cheat of the *Gentile* practitioners, yet on account of the credit, which they had gained with the people, and the difficulty of detecting the fraud, they might think it convenient perhaps, to oppose one cheat to another, and set up rival powers of their own, in opposition to those of their adversaries, in hopes of beating them at their own weapons.

For it is very hard to believe, what *Origen* declares above, that the Devils, for the sake of doing the greater mischief to

[1] Καὶ αὐτὴ μέχρι νῦν παρ' ἡμῶν ἡ θαυμασία πλεῖστον ἔχει. ἰσότησα γὰρ τινὰ Ε-

λεάζαρον, &c. *Antiq. Jud.* l. viii. c. 2. § 5.

[2] *Bingham, Antiqu. B.* 5. c. 4. § 3.

men,

men, *used to possess and destroy their cattel.* In confirmation of which, St. *Jerom* has related a most ridiculous story, in his life of St. *Hilarion* the Monk: where after a narrative of many cases of Devils, expelled by that saint from the bodies of men, he adds, “ but it is to little purpose to talk of men; brute
 “ animals also were dayly brought to him, mad or possessed:
 “ among the rest, a *Babrian Camel*, of an enormous size,
 “ which had already destroyed many people: above thirty men
 “ were employed to drag him along with the strongest ropes.
 “ His eyes were bloody; his mouth foaming; his tongue roll-
 “ ing and swollen; and his strange roaring above all terrors:
 “ the old man ordered it to be let loose: upon which all, who
 “ were about him, ran away immediately: the saint came for-
 “ ward alone, and in the *Syriac* tongue, said, *thou dost not*
 “ *affright me, Devil, with all that bulk of body: thou art one and*
 “ *the same in a little fox, or in a camel:* and so he stood firm
 “ with his arm stretched out; and as the beast advanced
 “ towards him, furious and ready to devour him, it presently
 “ fell down with it's head to the ground; so that all present
 “ were amazed at the sudden change, from so great a fierce-
 “ ness, to such a tameness. Upon which the old man took
 “ occasion to teach them, that the Devil used to seize cattel,
 “ out of his hatred to men, to whom he bore so great a
 “ grudge, as to wish, not onely that they, but that all which
 “ they had, might perish.” To this story I cannot forbear
 adding, what is likewise affirmed by the same *Jerom*, of the
 same *Hilarion*; that *he was so full of the power of the Holy Spirit,*
as to be able to discover, from the smell of the bodies and the cloaths
of men, or of any thing else, which they had but touched, to what
particular Dæmon, or to what vice they were severally subject.
 Now tho' this good Father invokes the assistance of the Holy Spi-

rit, in his attempt to describe a life so wonderful; yet all, who read it, must needs be persuaded, that out of his zeal and warm affection to the Monkish Order, which he professed, and from a desire to advance it's credit in the world, he either wholly invented, or at least willfully propagated all these extravagant tales, which he himself could not possibly believe: "The time," says he, would fail me, if I should attempt to relate all the "wonderfull works, that were performed by him—wherefore "by the influence of his Example, innumerable Monasteries "began to be founded through all Palæstine; and all the Monks "ran eagerly to Hilarion, &c. [1]." This was the real purpose of St. Jerom's zeal; this the fruit of his fictitious miracles. But to return to the *Dæmoniacs*. Since this gift of casting out Devils is what the Fathers, as I have said above, lay the greatest stress upon, and to which they make the most frequent appeals, it may be proper to strengthen what I have already been declaring upon it, by a few particular observations, which I would recommend to the attention of the reader.

1st, That there is such an uniformity in all the primitive accounts of them, tho' given by different Fathers and in different ages, of the Devils being scourged, burned, and tortured by the Christian Exorcists; and of their bowlings, discourses and confessions, that they all seem to have been cast in the same mould; and to have been the copies rather of one original story, transcribed by the later writers from the earlier, than the natural descriptions, of what each of them had severally seen, at different times, and in distant places [2].

2dly,

[1] Vid. Oper. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 82, 83, &c.

Tempus me deficiet, si voluero universa signa, quæ ab eo perpetrata sunt, dicere. — Exemplo itaque ejus innumerabilia Monasteria per totum Palæstinam esse cœpe-

Vol I,

runt, & ad eum omnes Monachi certatim currere, &c.

[2] See what I have collected above on this subject, from *Tertullian*, *Minucius Felix*, *Cyprian* and *Lactantius*. Thus Mr. *Whiston* also observes, that a good deal of

Y what

2dly, That the persons thus possessed, and in whom the Devils used to hold discourses, were called by the primitive Christians, Ἐγγαστριμῶνται or *Ventriloquists*; because they were believed to *speak out of the belly, through the navel* [1] Thus in a book ascribed to *Justin Martyr*, containing a number of *Quæstions*, with answers to them, for the use of the *Orthodox*, one of the *Quæstions* is this; “if all the arts of delusion are abolished by the coming of Christ, how comes it to pass, that Dæmons still speak by those, who are called *Ventriloquists*, and that they do not make Christianity ridiculous and contemptible, by shewing forth the works of imposture, and uttering oracular prædictions in the bodies of Christians [2]?”

Now many of us have seen, and may still see perhaps at this day, a sort of these *Ventriloquists*, who by a particular formation of their organs, managed by art and practice, could speak in such a manner, as to persuade the company, that the voice did not proceed from them, but from some invisible being: which they could direct likewise so, as to make it seem to come, from what part of the room they pleased: by which means, weak and ignorant people have been terrified almost out of their senses, believing it, to be the *voice of a Spirit or Dæmon*. If we suppose then, that there were any Artists of this kind among those ancient Christians, as there undoubtedly were among the ancient Gentiles, it is easy to imagine, what strange and surprizing feats might be performed, by a correspondence between the *Ventriloquist* and the *Exorcist*, so as to delude the most sensible and sagacious of their audience, pre-

was is said upon it by Minucius Felix, is made use of by Cyprian, soon after his time, and that almost verbatim. Account of the Dæmoniacks, p. 42.

[1] See Bing. Antiqu. l. 16. c. 5. § 4.

[2] Vid. Quæst. & Respons. ad Orthodox. Quæst. 8.

possessed with the belief of these diabolical possessions, and void of all suspicion, that such effects could possibly be produced by any human art or natural cause.

3dly, From the testimony of Antiquity itself it is evident, that many of their Dæmoniacs could not possibly be cured by all the power of the Exorcists; and that the cures, which are pretended to have been wrought on any, were but temporary, and appear to have been the cessation rather of a particular fit, or access of the distemper, than the real expulsion of a Dæmon. This may be clearly collected from the method of treating them in the primitive Church, as it was regulated by several Canons and rules, made for that purpose by Bishops and Councils, injoining: “ that they should not be received to baptism, but
“ in the intervals of their disorder; nor to the Communion,
“ unless they shewed signs of piety and sobriety, so as not to
“ expose and blaspheme the mysteries; in which case they
“ might communicate now and then: that they should never
“ be ordained or taken into any order of the Clergy; nor
“ allowed to pray in common with the congregation; but be
“ produced always separately, and commanded onely to bow
“ down their heads, while the rest of the assembly were offering up a prayer for them.” In different Churches however, a different discipline was observed with regard to them; for in some, they were admitted to baptism, and even to dayly communion; by which means many are affirmed to have been relieved, when all the arts of the Exorcists had been tried upon them in vain [1]. Now these cases manifestly shew, that this celebrated gift, as it was managed by the primitive Church, was not able to work an absolute cure; or to drive out the

[1] See Bing. Antiquit. book xi. c. v. ib. xvii. c. v. § iii, &c.
§ iii. it. ibid. book xv. c. iv. § xvi. it.

Devils so effectually, as to reduce the patients to a permanent state of sanity: so as to render them ordinarily capable, either of baptism, or the Eucharist, or of joining even with the congregation, in the daily prayers of the Church. Whence we may reasonably conclude; that it was nothing else, but a false mimicry of that genuine power, which was exercised by our Lord, and conferred afterwards on his Apostles: a power which never did it's work by halves, or left it's cures imperfect. For, as we learn from the Gospel, *Mary Magdalen*, from whom *seven Devils* were cast out, continued ever after in her sober senses; accompanying and ministering on all occasions to our Lord, to the time of his death: and the man also, out of whom a *Legion* of them was ejected, was restored at once to perfect health both of mind and body, and sent away to proclaim in *Decapolis*, and the neighbouring country, the miraculous cure which *Jesus* had wrought upon him [1].

4thly, There is another circumstance belonging to these primitive Dæmoniacks, of which the reader perhaps may desire some farther explication; I mean the great numbers of them, which appear to have subsisted in those early ages: whose chief habitation was within a part of the Church, allotted to them for that purpose; in which, as in a kind of Hospital, they were committed to the care of the Exorcists: whose business it was, “to pray over them on some occasions, and to provide
“ their daily food, and keep them employed in some bodily
“ exercise and innocent business, of sweeping the Church and
“ the like, to prevent the more violent agitations of Satan,
“ and lest he should be tempted by their idleness to renew his
“ attacks upon them [2].” Which method of relieving so

[1] Luke viii. 2. Matt. v. 20. Luke
viii. 39.

[2] Bing. book 111. c. iv. § vii.

miserable a tribe of helpless mortals, will account for the numbers, with which the Churches were stored; as well as for the confidence of those challenges, made to the Heathens, by the Christian Apologists, to come and see at any hour, and any warning, how they could *torment, and lash, and burn, and drive the evil spirits* out of them; while they kept such numbers of them in constant pay, always ready for the shew; tried and disciplined by their Exorcists, to an habit of groaning and howling, and to give proper answers to all questions, which should be demanded of them.

It is observable also in the last place, that this power of *exorcising Dæmoniacs or casting out Devils*, which had hitherto been in the hands onely of the meaner sort of the Christian layety, was put under the direction of the Clergy, by the *Council of Laodicea*, about the year of Christ three hundred and sixty seven, in which it was decreed, that *none should be Exorcists, but those, who were appointed by the Bishop*. After which appropriation of it, as Mr. *Whiston* informs us, “few or none
“ of the Clergy, nor indeed of the Layety, were any longer
“ able to cast out Devils: so that the old Christian exorcism
“ or prayer for the *Energumens* in the Church, began soon
“ after to be omitted as wholly useles [1].” Which sudden failure of so eminent a gift seems to be ascribed by him to that fatal step of this *unhappy Council*, as he calls it; as if, by their presumptuous attempt to controul the divine power, they had provoked God to withdraw it. But tho’ this solution of the case may be agreeable to the character and principles of that very learned and pious writer; yet it is more agreeable to reason and the experience of mankind, to suppose, that the licentious abuse of this imaginary power, by the many false and

[1] See Mr. *Whiston’s* Account of *Dæmoniacs*, p. 53.

impudent pretensions, of crafty impostors on the one hand, and wrong-headed Enthusiasts on the other, had brought such scandal on Christianity itself, that the Clergy were forced at last to interpose, and take the affair into their own hands. For that this was really the case, is manifestly shewn by the event: since the exercise of this gift was no sooner subjected to any regulation, even by those, who favored and desired to support it, than it gradually decreased and expired.

§ 4. The next miraculous gift ascribed to the primitive Church, is that of *Prophetic visions, and extatic trances, and the discovery of men's hearts*: for these seem to be the fruit of one and the same spirit: which exerted itself chiefly about the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, through *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days. "The divine censure, says *Cyprian*, does not cease to chastise us, neither by night, nor by day, for besides nightly visions, even boys among us are filled with the Holy Ghost, and in fits of ecstacy, see, hear, and utter things, by which the Lord thinks fit to admonish and instruct us [1]." This ecstacy was a temporary madness or loss of senses, and is called by *Tertullian*, *the spiritual virtue, in which prophecy consists* [2]. *Suidas* says, that of all the kinds of fury or madness, that of the Poets and Prophets was alone to be wished for [3].

Mr. *Dodwell* observes, "that visions were peculiar to the young, dreams to the old: because it required a great

[1] Castigare nos itaque divina censura nec noctibus definit nec diebus. Præter nocturnas enim visiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu sancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in extasi videt & audit & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus mone-
re & instruere dignatur. Epist. ad Cler.

1x. p. 22. Ed. Nic. Rigalt.

[2] Quum in illum Deus amentiam immisit, spiritalem vim, qua constat prophetia. De Anim. c. 21. it. 24.

[3] Τῶν μαωῶν—αἱ δὲ αἰρεῖαι καὶ εὐ-
χῆς ἀξίαι, οἷαι τῶν ποιητῶν, καὶ τῶν
χρησμολόγων. in voce Μανίαι.

“ strength of body to support the violence of such divine agitations [1].” *Philo*, the Jew, treating of the same ecstasies, with which the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament used to be affected, reasons thus, “ the human mind, says he, “ is symbolically called the Sun by *Moses*—while our mind “ therefore shines, and exerts itself within us, spreading as it “ were a meridian light through the Soul, we are then in our “ right senses, without any divine influx: but when the mind “ goes down, then a divine ecstasy and prophetic madness fall “ upon us: for when the divine light shines, the human sets: “ and when that sets, this again rises; and this is what usually happens to the prophetic race: for the mind is driven out of us, when the divine spirit comes in; and when this “ again quits us, the other returns: for it is not fit, that mortal should cohabit with immortal [2].”

From these testimonies we may collect, that the Prophecy of the Primitive Church by *vision* or *ecstasy*, was of the same kind, as to it's outward appearance, with *that divination by fury*, as it was called among the Gentiles, which was practised by the *Delphic Pythia*, and *Cumæan Sibyl*, when agitated by the pretended power and instinct of the God [3]. Of which *Cicero* says, in way of raillery; “ what authority can that madness

[1] Plane senibus ita *somnia* aptantur, ut Juvenibus *Visiones*. Vehemens nimirum illa humorum agitatio non erat nisi in ætatis vigore toleranda. &c. Vid. Dissert. Cyprian. iv. § 40.

[2] “Ἡλιον δὲ διὰ συμβόλου τὸν ἡμέτερον νῦν καλεῖ—ὅτε μὲν γὰρ φῶς ἐπιλάμπει τὸ θεῖον, δύεται τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, ὅτε δ' ἐκείνο δύει, τὸτ' αὐτίχῃ καὶ ἀνατέλλει. τῷ δὲ προφητικῷ γένει φιλεῖ τῷτο συμβαίνειν.—δέμης γὰρ ἔκ ἐστι, θεῶν ἀθανάτω συνοικῆσαι. &c. *Philo*. Quis.

Divinor. Hær. Oper. Tom. 1 p. 511. Edit. Lond. 1742.

[3] Inest igitur inanimis præflagitio—ea si exarsit acrius, furor appellatur, quam a corpore animus abstractus divino instinctu concitatur. Cic. de Div. 1. 31.

—————ca fræna furenti Concutit, & stimulos sub pectore vertit Apollo.

Ut primum cessit furor, & rabida ora quierunt. Virg. *Æn*. 6. 102.

“ have,

“ have, which you call divine; that a wise man should not be
 “ able to foresee, what a madman can; and that he, who has
 “ lost all human senses, should presently acquire divine
 ones [1].

Montanus the Heretic, and his female Associates, seem to have been the Authors of these prophetic trances, towards the end of the second century; and acquired great credit by their *visions and ecstasies*, in which they acted their part so well, by feigned distortions and convulsive agitations of the body, as to appear to be out of their senses; and in those fits, uttered many wild prophecies and prædictions, which they imposed upon the people for divine revelations; and by affecting at the same time a peculiar sanctity and severity of discipline, gathered a great number of disciples [2], who first raised and propagated that spirit of enthusiasm in the Church, which subsisted in it for near a century, under the title of *vision and prophecy*, and then gradually sunk into utter contempt.

Tertullian, a writer of this enthusiastic turn, severe in his manners, and stiff in his opinions, wrote with great vehemence against Plays and Shews: in which, as we have seen above, he made great use of visions, towards enforcing his argument. He wrote another book to prove, *that it was a Sin, for a Soldier, to wear a garland or crown on any occasion, and that a Christian should rather suffer martyrdom than submit to it* [3]: and in a third book, he affirms it to be rank idolatry, *to deck their doors with garlands or flowers, on Festival days, according to the custom of the Heathens*: “ and calls the name of God to witness, that

[1] Quid vero auctoritatis habet furor iste, quem divinum vocatis, ut quæ sapiens non videat, ea videat insanus; & is, qui humanos sensus amisit, divinos adsecutus sit? *De Div.* 2. 54.

[2] Vid. *Cave Hist. litt.* Vol. 1. p. 74. it. *Jo. Cleric. Hist. Eccles. ad Ann.* CLVII.

[3] Vid. lib. de Corona.

“ he knew a person, who had been grievously chastised in a vision, because his servants, even without his knowledge and in his absence, had crowned the door with flowers, on some occasion of public joy [1].” He wrote a treatise likewise, to prove the soul of man to be *corporeal and of human shape*: and for the truth of his opinion, appeals to his ecstatic maid above-mentioned, of whom he tells this story: that, “ as he happened to be discoursing on the nature of the soul, she fell into one of her trances: and as soon as the service was over, and the people dismissed, she came, as usual, to relate to him, what she had seen; which was always carefully taken down in writing, in order to be examined: when she declared, that there was shewn to her among other things, an human soul in bodily form; yet so, as to appear to be a spirit: not of a void and empty quality, but what might even be handled, tender and lucid, of an airy color, and in all points of human shape [2].” Which wild dream of a frantic, or fiction rather of a silly woman, this Father applies, as the testimony of God himself, to evince the certainty of his opinion. Lastly, in another book, written to prove, that women ought always *to wear a veil*, he declares, *that God, in a vision to a certain sister, had prescribed to her, by a special revelation, the exact length and measure of the veil* [3].

Now it is easy to imagine, how *Tertullian* might be imposed upon by the craft of these extatic visionaries; and by the

[1] Ex auctoritate quoque Dei confessor—scio fratrem per visionem eadem nocte castigatum graviter, quod januam ejus subito annuntiatis gaudiis publicis servi coronassent. &c. De Idolat. 15.

[2] Forte nescio quid de anima disse-rebamus, cum ea soror in Spiritu esset. Post transacta solennia, dimissa plebe—

inter cetera, inquit, offensa est mihi anima corporaliter, &c. Hoc visio, & Deus testis, & Apostolus Charismatum in Ecclesia futurorum Sponsor.—De Anima. c. 9.

[3] Nobis Dominus etiam revelationibus, velaminis spatia metatus est. Nam cuidam Sorori nostræ Angelus in Somnis. &c. De Virgin. Veland. 17.

warmth of his temper and force of his prejudices, be drawn to espouse any delusion, that flattered his particular zeal and favorite opinions. But it is difficult to account for the same conduct in his scholar *Cyprian*; a man of a more acute head, and sober mind; but fond of power and Episcopal Authority; whose character would tempt us to suspect, that he was the inventor, rather than the believer of such idle stories; and the director, rather than the dupe of senseless visionaries. Yet in all questionable points of doctrine or discipline, which he had a mind to introduce into the Christian worship, we find him constantly appealing to the testimony of *heavenly visions and divine revelations*. It is certain, says Mr. Dodwell, that all things of great moment, which related to the public state of the Church, were foretold to him in visions [1]. For instance; in a letter to *Cæcilius*, he declares, that he had received a divine admonition, to mix water with wine in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in order to render it effectual [2]. In another to the Clergy, concerning certain Priests, who had restored some lapsed Christians too hastily to the Communion of the Church; he threatens them, to execute, what he was ordered to do against them, in a vision, if they did not desist [3]. He makes the same threat to one *Pupianus*, who had spoken ill of him, and with-

[1] Adeo familiares *Cypriano* erant hujusmodi visiones, ut disciplinæ etiam Ecclesiasticæ exercitio illas acceperit, aliasque deinceps expectaret, &c. Dissert. *Cyprian*. iv. § 20.

Ita constat gravioris momenti omnia, quæ quidem publicum Ecclesiæ statum attinerent, esse istiusmodi visionibus prædicta. *ibid.* § 21.

[2] Nec nos putes, frater carissime, nostra & humana conscribere, aut ultronea

voluntate hoc nobis audacter assumere.—Sed quando aliquid Deo aspirante & mandante præcipitur, necesse est Domino servus scias, ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur &c. Epist. lxxiii.

[3] Quoniam si ultra in iisdem perseveraverint, utar ea admonitione, qua me Dominus uti jubet.—Ep. ix. p. 22.

drawn himself from his communion [1]: where his Editor *Rigaltius* makes this remark, “ that the argument of visions
“ and divine revelations, which *Cyprian* so frequently uses, is
“ a weapon of great force in the hands of so good a man,
“ otherwise a vain and contemptible one; since crafty Sophists
“ might easily invent such visions, in favor of any cause, to
“ delude the simple and unwary [2].

In a letter likewise to the Clergy and the People, *Cyprian* tells them, “ how he had been admonished and directed by
“ God, to ordain one *Numidicus* a Priest: who by his persua-
“ sive exhortations had sent a large number of Martyrs before
“ him to the other world, either stoned or burnt to death; and
“ beheld even with joy, the wife of his bosom burnt together
“ with the rest; being himself also left for dead, half burnt,
“ and buried in stones, till he was found scarce alive, and
“ carried off by the piety of his daughter, and so restored to
“ the world against his will. But the Lord had now signified
“ the cause of it; that he might add him to the Priesthood of
“ his Church [3].” In another letter he recommends to them one *Celerinus*, whom he had ordained a lecturer: *whose modesty*, he says, *had been over-ruled and compelled by a divine vision, to accept*

[1] Epist. LXIX. p. 118. Memini enim quid mihi ostensum sit, &c.

[2] Hic etiam (*Cyprianus*) utitur ostensionibus & visionibus; telo, ad conterendos adversarios, in manu præsertim *Cypriani*, viri optimi atque divini, valentissimo; alias vano ac futili. Nam & callidus Rhetor & Sophista vafer hujusmodi visa ad causam suam appositissima, poterit comminisci, & fallere incautos & simplices. Rigalt. Not. ibid.

[3] Nam admonitos nos & instructos

sciatis dignatione divina ut *Numidicus* Presbyter ascribatur—qui hortatu suo copiosum Martyrum numerum, lapidibus & flammis necatum ante se misit: quique uxorem adhærentem lateri suo, concrematam simul cum cæteris—lætus aspexit. Ipse semiustulatus & lapidibus obrutus, & pro mortuo derelictus,—remanfit invictus, sed remanendi, ut videmus, hæc fuit causa, ut eum Clero nostro Dominus adjungeret. Ep. 35.

that office [1]. Where *Rigaltius* once more reflects, on the great diligence of *Cyprian*, in making such use of visions [2]. But *Cyprian* himself suggests the reason of it, in the Epistle immediately preceding, addressed likewise to the Clergy and the people, concerning one *Aurelius*, whom he had ordained a lecturer, by a *divine admonition*, without calling them together and consulting with them in common, concerning the character, and merit of the Candidate, as it was the custom of those days in all *Clerical ordinations*; for which he excuses himself by saying, that there was no occasion, in the present case, to wait for human testimonies, when the divine suffrage had already been signified [3]. This then seems to be the meaning of *Cyprian's* diligence in the use of visions, that whenever he thought fit to exert his Episcopal authority, without the previous consent of his Clergy and people, he might obviate their murmurs by alledging a divine command for it.

But the most memorable effect of any of his visions was his flight and retreat, when he withdrew himself from his Church, in the time of persecution. A step which gave great scandal, and seems to have been considered by the Clergy of *Rome*, in a public letter written upon the subject of it, to the Clergy of *Carthage*, as a desertion of his post, and pastoral duty [4]. So that it is no wonder to find *Cyprian* himself, as well as his Apologist *Pontius*, the writer of his Life, so solicitous to excuse it. "There is no doubt, says *Rigaltius*, but that the severity of "his master *Tertullian*, who wrote a book against all flight in

[1] R. ferimus ad vos *Calerinum*. — Clero nostro non humana suffragatione sed divina dignatione conjunctum, &c. Ep. 34.

[2] Notanda hic etiam est industria *Cypriani*, visionum efficacia tam suaviter utentis. Not. b. ibid.

[3] In Ordinationibus Clericis, Fratres

carissimi, solemus vos ante consulere, & mores ac merita singulorum communi consilio ponderare, sed expectanda non sunt testimonia humana, cum præcedunt divina suffragia, &c. Ep. 33.

[4] Vid. *Cyprian. Epist. 2.*

“ time of persecution, raised such scruples and shame in the
 “ mind of *Cyprian*, as made him labour hard to wipe off that
 “ disgrace; as the pains and perplexity of his Advocate *Pontius*
 “ likewise shew [1].” * They both of them therefore affirm,
 “ that he was commanded to retire, *by a special revelation from*
 “ *heaven*: and that his flight was not the effect of any other
 “ fear, but that of offending God: and that his mind, wholly
 “ devoted and subservient to the admonitions of God, was per-
 “ suaded, that, if he had not obeyed the Lord, when he com-
 “ manded him to retreat, he should sin even by suffering mar-
 “ tyrdom [2].” Yet this plea was nothing else without doubt,
 but a mere fiction, contrived for the purpose of quieting the
 scandal, that was raised by his flight, and is in effect confuted
 by himself in another letter to the Clergy, in which he declares,
 “ that it was the advice and authority of one *Tertullus*, which
 “ prevailed with him to withdraw himself from a place, where
 “ his life was so much sought for: wherefore he desires them
 “ to perform all the functions of his office for him during his
 “ retreat, since their persons were not exposed to so much envy
 “ and danger as his would be [3].”

Dionysius,

[1] Secessus iste Cypriani fugæ probro minime caruit,—nec dubito quin ipsa tanti Magistri severitas discipuli mentem adeo suffuderit, vel aliquo saltem scrupulo sic pupugerit, ut fugæ suspicionem Cyprianus abs se amoliri magno studio contenderet. Hoc & Pontii familiaris sui satis intricata sedulitas ostendit, ipsiusque Cypriani Epistolæ sequentes declarant. Et si verum amamus, haud aliud magis ista Romani Clerici tam argumentosa quam incondita com-
 monitio proferunt. Rigalt. ibid. Not. b.

[2] Et audietis omnia quando ad vos reducem me Dominus fecerit, qui, ut *seca-*

derem, jussit. Epist. ix. p. 22.

Fuit vero formido illa, sed justa; formido, quæ Dominum timeret offendere. Formido, quæ præceptis Dei mallet obsequi, quam sic coronari. Dicata enim in omnibus Deo mens, & fides divinis admonitionibus mancipata, credidit se, nisi Domino latebram tunc jubenti paruisset, etiam ipsa passione peccare. Cyprian. Vit. per Pontium. p. 13.

[3] A *Tertullo*, fratre nostro carissimo, ratio redditur: qui pro cetera sua cura, quam impendens divinis operibus imperit, etiam hujus consilii auctor fuit, ut cautus
 & mo-

Dionysus, Bishop of *Alexandria*, who lived in the same age, has left the same story likewise concerning himself, and swears to the truth of it: that in the time of a persecution, he was commanded by God in a vision, to retire from *Alexandria*, and was wonderfully preserved and guarded by him in his retreat [1]. *And shall we not believe a most holy Bishop*, says Mr. *Dodwell*, *even upon his oath* [2]? The same *Dionysus* affirms likewise, that he had another vision upon the subject of *reading Heretical books*, about which, he had some scruples, till a voice from heaven expressly enjoined him, to read them all without reserve, because he was able to examine and confute them [3]. This reminds me of a vision also which St. *Jerom* declares to have been given to himself, about a century after; in which he was dragged to the *Tribunal of Christ*, and terribly threatened, and even scourged for the grievous sin of reading secular and profane writers, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace; whom for that reason he resolved never to take into his hands any more: upon which *Ruffinus* rallies him with great spirit and smartness, for inventing and publishing so silly a lie [4]. And it must needs be thought strange, that God should injoin

& moderatus existerem, nec me in conspectum publicum, & maxime ejus loci, ubi toties flagitatus & quæsitus fuisssem, temere committerem. Fretus ergo & dilectione & religione vestra, his litteris & hortor & mando, ut vos quorum minime illic invidiosa & non adeo periculosa præsentia est, vice mea fungamini, &c. Ep. 5. p. 13.

[1] Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ ἐνώπιον τῷ Θεῷ λαλῶ, καὶ αὐτὸς οἶδεν ὅτι ἐψεύδομαι. Ἐδεμίαν ἐπιμαυῖν βαλλόμενος, οἷδ' ἄθεε! ποιήματα τὴν φυγὴν. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 6. c. 40.

[2] Quid hic facimus? Viro Sanctissimo ne jurato quidem credemus? Dissert. Cyprian. 1v. § 17.

[3] Ὅραμα Θεόπεμπτον ἐπὶ ῥώσέ με, καὶ λόγος πρὸς με γενόμενος, προσέταξε διαρρήδην λέγων, πᾶσιν ἐνύγχανε οἷς αὐ εἰς χεῖρας λάβοις. διευθύνει γὰρ ἕκαστα καὶ δοκιμάζειν ἱκανὸς εἶ. Euseb. Hist. 7. 7.

[4] Ostendam apud ipsum (*Hieronymum*) tam licita haberi perjuriam, ut in scriptis quoque suis deprehendi ea non erubescat.—Et cetera cum dixisset ejusmodi, quibus alienam esse a Christiano assereret librorum sæcularium lectionem, inserit etiam revelationem quandam ad se divinitus factum. &c. Rufin. adv. Hieron. Vid. Oper. Hieron. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 414. Edit. Benedict.

contrarieties to his Saints and Servants; should command one *Father*, to read *Heretical books*, because he was able to confute them, yet forbid it afterwards to another, who was full as able, to confute them, as his Predecessor. But if *Jerom's* vision deserved to be treated by his contemporaries as a fiction, I see no reason, either from the nature of the thing, or the use, which is made of it, or the characters of the persons concerned, why *the visions of Cyprian and Dionysius*, should not merit the same treatment.

But how credible soever these visions might appear to the generality of Christians in those days, yet there were many at the same time, as *Cyprian* himself confesses, who contemned and made a jest of them all, as mere illusions and impertinent fancies: but they were a sort of men, he says, *who would sooner believe any thing against a Priest, than believe a Priest* [1].

In one of the Dialogues, commonly ascribed to *Lucian*, the Christians seem to be ridiculed, on the account of their *fasting and watching whole nights in hymns and prayers, as if they could infuse by that means, what sort of dreams or visions they thought fit* [2]. Now there is a passage so applicable to this remark, in the antient narrative of the Martyrdom of St. *Ignatius*, as to make us almost imagine, that the author had alluded to it. The narrative was drawn up by persons, who had accompanied the Martyr from *Asia to Rome*, whose thoughts, for several months past, had been employed on nothing else but the subject of his Martyrdom, and it concludes thus. “ These things were done on the 13th of the Kalends of *January*; “ *Sura* and *Synecius* being the second time Consuls of *Rome*; of

[1] Quanquam sciam somnia ridicula, & visiones ineptas quibusdam videri; sed utique illis, qui malunt contra sacerdotes credere, quam sacerdoti. Ep. 68. p. 118.

[2] Ἐλεγον γὰρ εἰλίης δίκαι ἄστροι δια-
μενῶμεν. καὶ ἐπὶ παννύχως ὑμνωδίας πα-
γρυπνῶντες, ὁνειρώττομεν τὰ τοιαῦτα.—
Philopatris. vers. fin.

“ which we ourselves were eye witnesses. And the night following, as we were watching with tears in the house, and praying to God with bended knees, that he would impart to us weak men, some assurance of what was done, [with regard to the Martyr;] it happened, that falling into a slumber, some of us, on a sudden, saw the blessed *Ignatius* standing before us and embracing us; others beheld the blessed Martyr praying for us; others, as it were dropping with sweat, as if just come from his great labor, and standing by the Lord: which when we saw, being filled with joy, and comparing the visions of our dreams with each other, we glorified God the giver of all good, and being assured of the blessedness of the Saint, we have made known unto you, both the day and the time, that being assembled together, according to the time of his Martyrdom, we may communicate with the combatant and most valiant Martyr of Christ [1].

But to declare freely what I think: whatever ground there might be in those primitive ages, either to reject or to allow the authority of those visions, yet from all the accounts of them, that remain to us in these days, there seems to be the greatest reason to suspect, that they were all contrived, or authorized at least, by the leading men of the Church, for the sake of moderating and governing with more ease, the unruly spirit of the populace, in those times of danger and difficulty. For they are generally applied, to excuse the conduct of particular persons, in some instances of it liable to censure; or to enforce some particular doctrine or discipline, warmly pressed by some, and not well relished by others; or to confirm things

[1] Vid. Coteler. Patr. Apostol. Vol. also Archbishop Wake's Translation. II. Martyr. S. Ignat. § viii. p. 161. See

not onely trifling and frivolous, but sometimes even superstitious and hurtfull to true religion.

I have already observed, that it was the Heretic *Montanus*, who first gave a vogue to *prophetic visions and ecstasies*, in the primitive Church. But when his pretensions came afterwards to be suspected and decried, it is remarkable, that those, who undertook to expose and confute them, employed such arguments against his prophecy, as seemed to shake the credit of all prophecy. For whereas the *Montanists* delivered their prophecies always in *ecstasy*, or with loss of senses; it was then urged against them, “that this was the proof of a Diabolical “ spirit; that the true Prophets never had such fits; never lost “ their senses; but calmly and sedately received and understood “ whatever was revealed to them.” And *Epiphanius* makes this the very criterion or distinguishing character between a true and false prophet; *that the true had no ecstasies, constantly retained his senses, and with firmness of mind apprehended and uttered the divine oracles* [1]. *St. Jerom* also declares, *that the true Prophets never spake in ecstasy, or madness of heart, like Montanus and his mad women, Prisca, and Maximilla, but understood what they delivered, and could speak or hold their tongues, whenever they pleased, which those, who spake in ecstasy, could not do* [2]. *Eusebius* also mentions a book of one *Miltiades*, written against *Montanus*, the purpose of which was, to prove, *that a Prophet ought not to*

[1] “Οτε γὰρ ἦν χρεῖα, ἐν προφῆταις, ἐν ἀληθινῷ πνεύματι, καὶ ἐρρωμένη δινοῖα καὶ παρεκλογισμῶν νῶ, οἱ αὐτῇ ἅγιοι τὰ πάντα προεφῆευσαν. &c. Adv. Hæres. l. 2. T. 1. § 111. p. 404.

[2] Non enim loquitur (Propheta) in ἐκστάσει extasi, ut *Montanus* & *Prisca Maximillaque* delirant, sed quod prophetat,

liber est visionis intelligentis universa quæ loquitur. Hier. Op. Vol. III. p. 1559. Prolog. in Naum Proph.

Qui autem in ecstasi, id est, invitatus loquitur, nec tacere nec loqui in sua potestate habet. ibid. Prol. in Abacuc. p. 1591.

speaking in ecstasy [1]. Yet from the testimonies collected above, we have seen, that before the *Montanists* had brought those *ecstasies* into disgrace, the prophecy of the orthodox, as well as that of the Heretics, was declared to have been exerted in *ecstasy*, And it appears to have been the current opinion in those earlier days, that the Prophets also of the old Testament received and uttered their revelations in *ecstasy*.

Athenagoras expressly affirms it, and says, “that while they “were under the divine impulse, they were transported out of “their senses, and delivered in ecstasy what was inspired, “being mere organs of the Holy Spirit, just as a pipe or flute “is of him, who blows into it [2].” *Justin Martyr* speaks of them in the same strain, “that the spirit of God descending “from above, made use of them, as of an instrument, just “as the quill strikes the harp or lyre, to reveal to us the knowledge of divine and heavenly things [3].” *Tertullian* also declares, “that he, who has the spirit within him, must necessarily be deprived of his senses, especially whenever he “beholds the glory of God, or when God speaks by him, as “being then overshadowed by the divine power [4].

Again, *Montanus's* Associate *Maximilla*, gave out, *that the gift of prophecy was to cease with her*, and no other Prophet to arise after her. In answer to which, the Orthodox asserted, *that the true spirit of prophecy could never fail or cease in the*

[1] Ἐν ᾧ ἀποδείκνυσσι περὶ τῆ μη δειῦ προφήτην ἐν ἐκστάσει λαλεῖν. Euseb. Hist. l. 5. c. 17.

[2] Οἱ καὶ ἔκτασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, λογισμῶν, κινήσαντες αὐτὰς τῷ θεῷ πνεύματι, ἃ ἐνηργεῖτο ἐξεφώνησαν. ὥστε καὶ αὐλητὴς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεῦσαι. Legat. pr. Christian. p. 9. Edit. ad calcem Oper. Just. Mart.

[3] Ἰν αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ ἡραυῶ καί ποιν πληκίρον, ὥσπερ ὄργανον κιθάρης τινὸς ἢ λύρας τοῖς δικαίοις ἀνθρώποις χρωόμενον, τὴν τῶν θεῶν ἡμῖν καὶ ἡραυῶν ἀποκαλύψῃ γνώσιν. Cohort. ad gent. p. 9. B.

[4] In spiritu enim homo constitutus, præsertim quum gloriam Dei conspicit, vel per ipsum Deus loquitur, necesse est, excidat sensu—Adv. Marcion. l. 4. p. 537.

Church, till the consummation of all things [1]. In which, as Mr. *Dodwell* owns, “ the Ancients argued rashly, and were mistaken in their notion of the perpetuity of prophecy: since “ *Eusebius*, who made it his business to explore and deduce the “ succession of those prophetic gifts, intimates, that they were “ ceased and vanished in his days [2]:” that is, about the middle of the fourth century.

Since we are now considering the miracles of the *Cyprianic* age, I cannot forbear taking notice of two or three of those wonderfull stories, which *Cyprian* himself attests, in that magnificent treatise, as it was called, concerning the lapsed Christians, who, in the time of persecution, had been induced, by the terrors of present death or tortures, to deny Christ, or offer incense to an Idol. “ There was a man, says he, who went “ up voluntarily to the Capitol, to deny the Lord; and when “ he had denied him, was presently struck dumb.—A woman “ also, who, after her lapse, had the impudence to go to the “ baths, was there seized by an unclean spirit, and thrown to the “ ground, and with her teeth tore that tongue, with “ which she had been either talking, or feeding impiously; “ and so became her own executioner; for she died not long “ after in great anguish and torments of her bowels.” He introduces the next story more solemnly, by declaring, that he himself was present and an eye-witness of it. “ Certain Parents, “ says he, too solicitous for their own safety, and flying from

[1] Φάσκει γὰρ ἡ παρ’ αὐτοῖς λεγόμενη Μαξιμίλλα ἡ προφήτις—μὲν ἐμὴ προφήτις ἐκείτη ἔσται, ἀλλὰ συνίλεται. &c. *Epiphanius*. *Hæres.* 48. § 2. Δεῖν γὰρ εἶναι τὸ προφήτικον χάρισμα ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Εκκλησίᾳ μέχρι τῆς τελείας παρουσίας, ὃ Ἀπόστολος ἀξιοῖ. *Euseb.* *Hist.* 5. 17.

in tota hac de prophetiarum perpetuitate, hallucinatos esse veteres. *Dissert. Cypr.* IV. § 13.

Eusebius, qui hoc in sua historia notatum dignum duxerit, quousque donorum prophetarum successio permanavit, id sane innuit, suo jam tempore illam defecisse. *ibid.* § 22.

[2] Scio equidem lubensque concedo,

“ persecution, left an infant daughter to the care of a nurse;
 “ who carried it presently to the Magistrates. These, being
 “ then assembled with the people before an Idol, and seeing
 “ the child not yet old enough to eat flesh, gave it a piece of
 “ bread dipt in wine, being the remains of what had been
 “ offered to the Idol. The mother, ignorant of the fact,
 “ within a short time after took her daughter home again;
 “ but the child was yet no more able to discover the crime com-
 “ mitted, than she was before, to understand or to hinder it.
 “ The mother brought her therefore to us at the Sacrament,
 “ while we knew nothing of the matter. But the child being
 “ now mingled with the Saints, and impatient of the service
 “ and prayers, began to be seized, sometimes with fits of cry-
 “ ing, sometimes with tortures of the mind, and, as if it had
 “ been upon the rack, betrayed by all the signs, which it’s
 “ tender age could give, a sense of guilt and consciousness of
 “ the fact. The service being ended, when the Deacon began
 “ to give the Cup to all present, and it came to the child’s
 “ turn, the little one, by divine instinct, turned away it’s
 “ face, held it’s lips close shut, and refused the cup: the Dea-
 “ con persisted, and poured a little down its throat, tho’ by
 “ force: upon this, convulsions and vomitings ensued: the
 “ Eucharist could not stay in a body and mouth so defiled:
 “ the consecrated potion of the Lord’s blood burst out of it’s
 “ polluted bowels: so great is the power, so great the majesty
 “ of the Lord: the secrets of darkness are detected by it’s
 “ light: nor could hidden crimes be concealed from the Priest
 “ of God: for this happened to an infant, which was not yet
 “ of age to speak, or tell the crimes, which others had com-
 “ mitted upon it. There was another woman, says *Cyprian*,
 “ who, after she had taken the Sacrament with us unobserved,
 “ was,

“ was instantly seized, with pains and torments, and fell
 “ down convulsed and trembling, as if she had swallowed a
 “ sword or deadly poison: and her crime, which had escaped
 “ the notice of men, met with it’s punishment from God.
 “ Another, who had attempted with her polluted hands to open
 “ her chest,” (in which the consecrated elements, according to
 the custom of that age, were kept for her use at home,) “ fire
 “ burst out of it in such a manner, that she durst not touch it.
 “ Another man, who had also been defiled, having had the
 “ assurance to take a part of the consecrated bread, among the
 “ rest, undiscovered, could neither eat nor handle it, but
 “ instead of it, found a coal of fire in his hands [1].

Now what other notion can we reasonably entertain of these
 strange stories, but that they were partly forged, and partly
 aggravated and dressed up into this tragical form, from some
 accidental disorders, which the sense of a concealed guilt, and
 the dread of God’s judgments upon it, would naturally raise
 in anxious minds, on that awful occasion of receiving the
 Sacrament? For it is certain, that they were of the greatest
 use, in these times of danger and trial, to support the discipline
 of the Church, which the *Lord guarded*, as Mr. *Dodwell* says,
by these terrors, as by the sword of a Cherubim [2]. Since none of
 those, who had secretly lapsed, or been weak enough to deny
 the faith, and from a desire of concealing their shame, had
 evaded the penance of the Church, durst either come openly
 to the Sacrament, or take it even privately at home, or yet
 wholly abstain from it, when the divine judgements were so sig-
 nally exerted upon all, who had ventured on any of those expe-

[1] Vid. Cyprian, de Lapsis, Edit. Nic. Rigalt. p. 175.

quasi gladio quodam Cherubico, sanctam undequeque disciplinam. Diss. Iren. 2.

[x] Ita munivit Ecclesiæ suæ Dominus, § 54.

dients, before they had made a public satisfaction for their crime, and been absolved of it in form by the Pastors of the Church. And it was without doubt for this end, that all these stories, with many more of the same kind, were so pompously and rhetorically set forth by this eminent Bishop, in his celebrated treatise concerning the *lapsed* Christians.

§ 5. As to the gift of *expounding the Scriptures, or the mysteries of God*, by a divine inspiration, which is claimed likewise by the Primitive Fathers, there is not the least trace of it to be found in any age of the Church, from the days of the Apostles. For in the second and third Centuries, the very period, in which all the other miraculous gifts are supposed to have flourished in their greatest vigor, it is certain, as we have seen above, that a most senseless, extravagant, and enthusiastic method of expounding prevailed, which has ever since been utterly slighted and rejected: whereas in these later days, when all extraordinary gifts are confessedly ceased, a clear, solid, and rational way of interpreting generally obtains, as the warmest advocates of Antiquity are forced to allow. And whenever any particular Father happens to be censured for his ridiculous comments on sacred Writ, his Apologists with one voice alledge, that such expositions are not to be charged to the man, *but to the age, in which he lived*, which could not relish or indure any better.

Justin Martyr however lays claim to this gift, as *conferred upon him by the special grace of God* [1], upon which *Mr. Tillamont* declares, “ that of all the extraordinary graces, which the “ Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Church in those times, there

[1] Ἀπεκάλυψεν ἡ μὲν πάντα ὅσα καὶ νενοήκαμεν. *Just. Dial. Par. 2. p. 352.*
ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτῆς Edit. Thirlb. it. p. 258, 391.

“ were few so considerable, as that of understanding the Scriptures, which was communicated by singular favor to *Justin* [1].” Yet from all the writings and monuments of the very earliest Fathers, which remain to us, it is manifest, beyond all contradiction, that there never was any such gift in the Church, after the times of the Apostles; and that *Justin* in particular, had no better claim to it, than any of the rest. And if those Fathers then, through a fervency of zeal, or an enthusiastic turn of mind, could mistake such fanciful expositions, for divine inspirations, I see no reason, why they might not as easily be deluded in every other instance of those pretended gifts, which flattered the same zeal and spirit, that so strongly possessed them.

It is a common case with men of great piety, zealously persuaded of the truth and high importance of any religious doctrine, to think it reasonable, that God should interpose himself miraculously in favor of it, when it happens to be opposed by any earthly power and in danger of being oppressed: and when they are thus prepared by their prejudices, to expect a divine interposition, they listen to every pretension of that sort, which craft or wild enthusiasm can devise, without allowing their reason to examine it, or to suggest the suspicion of a fraud. There are many instances of this in History, and a remarkable one in our own; that of *the Holy Maid of Kent*, in the reign of *Henry the 8th*: who by the pretence of *visions and divine revelations*, communicated in *trances or ecstasies*, contrived by Popish Priests, to raise the sinking credit of their cause, drew in Bishop *Fisher*, with many other eminent persons, to take her for a *Prophetess*, divinely inspired, as *Tertullian* did his *ecstatic Maid*. Yet this modern Prelate was more learned

[1] Memoirs. Tom. 2. p. 358, 380.

and judicious, than any one perhaps of all the antient Fathers, and by all accounts of him, as pious and religious too: since he lost his life, or, in the stile of the *Romish* Church, suffered martyrdom, for the sake of those very prejudices, which betrayed him into this folly. But the Lord *Cromwell*, expostulating with him on that subject, rightly told him, “ that the
 “ true reason, which induced him to give credit to the maid,
 “ was the matter of her prophecies; to which he was so
 “ addicted, that nothing could come amiss, which served to
 “ that end; and he appealed to his conscience, whether, if
 “ she had prophesied in favor of the King’s proceedings, he
 “ would have given such easy credit to her, and not have examined the matter farther [1].

§ 6. The *gift of tongues* also is claimed, as we have seen among the rest, and affirmed to have been actually possessed by the primitive Christians: for if the testimony of *Irenæus* can be credited, many were indued with it in his days, and heard to *speak all kinds of languages in the Church*. And in truth, this gift, in the common estimation of human reason, has been thought so essentially necessary to the propagation of the Gospel, in those first ages, that the Advocates of the primitive miracles, trusting to that hypothesis, instead of searching into the fact, urge the necessity of its continuance after the days of the Apostles, as a proof of the continuance of all the rest. Yet how great soever the importance of it may seem to be, it is evident, as I have elsewhere shewn, from the origin, nature and exercise of it, as they are represented in the New Testament, that it was not permanent or lasting, either in the Church at large, or in those particular persons who were

[1] See Bp. Burnet, *Hist. Reform*. Vol. I. p. 154.

principally favored with it, but was granted onely on certain special occasions, and then again withdrawn, even from the Apostles themselves; so that, in the ordinary course of their ministry, they appear to have been generally destitute of it.

Irenæus however declares it to have been indulged to many in his days. But it is very remarkable, that this Primitive Bishop, who ascribes it so liberally to others, appears to have been in great want of it himself, for the propagation of the Gospel in his own *Diocese*, among the *Celtæ*, or *Gauls*; where, as *Dr. Cave* interprets his words, *it was not the least part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the country; a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1]. Nor is it less strange also, that from the time of *Irenæus*, there is not a single Father, in all the succeeding ages, who, upon his authority, has ventured to carry on the same pretension, or make the least claim to it; or to speak of it in any other manner, than as a gift peculiar to the first Christians, in the times of the Apostles. And I might risk the merit of my argument on this single point; that, after the Apostolic times, there is not in all history one instance, either well attested, or even so much as mentioned, of any particular person, who had ever exercised this gift, or pretended to exercise it, in any age or country whatsoever. *Mr. Dodwell* supposes it to have ceased, in the reign of *M. Aurelius*, about sixty years after the death of *St. John* [2]. But it is not credible, that a gift of such eminent use should intirely cease, while all the rest were subsisting in full vigor, and abounding every day more and more. If, according to the common hypothesis, we admit

[1] See *Cave's Lives of Saints*. Vol. I. p. 169. § 1x.

[2] *A Marci temporibus deficere cœpo-*

runt gratiæ illæ extraordinariæ—defecere eorundem dona linguarum. *Diff. in Iren.* 2. § 44.

them all to be true, it is not possible, I say, to imagine any cause, why this in particular should be withdrawn, and the rest continued: but if, agreeably to my system, we consider them all, as fictitious, we then see an obvious and manifest reason for it. For all the other extraordinary gifts, *of healing diseases, casting out Devils, visions, and ecstasie revelations*, afford great room to Impostors, to exert all their craft of surprizing and dazzling the senses of the simple, the credulous, and the superstitious of all ranks: whereas the *gift of tongues* cannot easily be counterfeited, or a pretension to it imposed on men of sense, or on any indeed, but those, who are utterly illiterate and strangers to all tongues but their own: and to acquire a number of languages by natural means, and to a degree, that might make them pass for a supernatural gift, was a work of so much difficulty and labor, as rendered it impracticable to support a pretension of that kind, for a succession of many years. And this, in all probability, was the real cause of it's being dropped so early in those primitive ages: for after the mention of it by *Ireneus*, we find it no longer in any subsequent list of the miraculous gifts, nor the least hint of it's continuance in the Church, in any later writer, from that time, down to the present. If this then appears to have been the case of this particular gift; that a false claim to it was made by the early Fathers, and held up for a while, till it could no longer be supported; it is sufficient, one would think, of itself, to blast the general credit of all the rest, tho' no particular mark of fraud could have been fixed on each of them separately: but when there is not a single one among them all, which, either from it's nature, or end, or manner of exertion, or the character of its witnesses, does not furnish just ground to suspect it as fictitious, it must needs persuade every rational inquirer,

inquirer, that they were all derived from the same source of craft and imposture.

In short; if we trace the history of this gift from it's origin, we shall find, that, in the times of the Gospel, in which alone the miracles of the Church are allowed to be true by all Christians; it was the first gift, which was conferred upon the Apostles, in a public and illustrious manner, and reckoned ever after among the principal of those, which were imparted to the first converts. But in the succeeding ages, when miracles began to be of a suspected and dubious character, it is observable; that this gift is mentioned but once by a single writer, and then vanished of a sudden, without the least notice, or hint given by any of the antients, either of the manner, or time, or cause of it's vanishing. Lastly, in the later ages, when the miracles of the Church were not only suspected, but found to be false by our Reformers, and considered as such ever since by all Protestants, this gift has never once been heard of, or pretended to by the Romanists themselves, tho' they challenge at the same time all the other gifts of the Apostolic days. From all which, I think, we may reasonably infer, that *the gift of tongues*, may be considered, as a proper test and criterion, for determining the miraculous pretensions of all Churches, which derive their descent from the Apostles: and consequently, if, in the list of their extraordinary gifts, they cannot shew us this, we may fairly conclude, that they have none else to shew, which are real and genuin.

I have now run through all the various kinds of the miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have subsisted in the Church, during the second and third centuries; and have opened the genuin state of them, as far as it is discoverable to us at this distance, from the most authentic monuments and

testimonies of the principal Fathers of those centuries. Ages, which are always stiled the purest, and in which these very Fathers bore the first character; not onely on the account of their piety and integrity, but of their abilities also and learning. If any suspicions then can be entertained against such witnesses, they will be stronger still against all who succeeded them, especially after the Empire became Christian, when, according to the hypothesis of the very Admirers of these primitive ages, a general corruption both of faith and morals began more openly to infect the Christian Church: which by that revolution, as St. *Jerom* says, *lost as much of her virtue, as it had gained of power and wealth* [1].

But in the case of these miracles, there is one circumstance, common to all the writers, who attest them, as well in the earlier, as the later ages; that tho' their assertions be strong, their instances are weak; and when, in proof of what they affirm, they descend to alledge any particular facts, they are usually so unlucky in the choice of them, that instead of strengthening, they weaken the credit of their general affirmation, and, from the absurdity of each miracle related by them, furnish a fresh objection to their power of working any. This the reader can hardly fail to observe, from the examples already produced; to which I shall add one or two more, of the most considerable, which are transmitted to us from the same ages, and which I had before omitted to recite.

One of the most authentic and celebrated pieces in all primitive antiquity, is *the circular letter of the Church of Smyrna*, containing a narrative of the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, their Bishop, and *of the many miracles*, as Mr. *Dodwell* says, *which*

[1] Et postquam ad Christianos Principes venerit, potentia quidem & divitiis major, sed virtutibus minor est. Oper. Tom. 2. par. 2. p. 91.

made it illustrious [1]. This letter, written about the middle of the second century, informs us, “ that when that Saint was
 “ entering the lists, in which he was to be burnt, there was so
 “ great a tumult, that nobody could be heard.—But there
 “ came a voice to him from heaven, saying, *be strong*, Polycarp,
 “ *and acquit thyself like a man*: and tho’ no body saw, who it was
 “ that spake, yet many of the brethren heard the voice [2].—As
 “ soon as he had finished his prayer, the executioner kindled the
 “ fire, and the flame began to blaze to a great height. When
 “ behold, says the writer, a mighty wonder appeared to us, whose
 “ lot it was to see it, and who were reserved by heaven, to declare
 “ to others what we had seen. For the flame, forming a kind
 “ of arch, like to the sail of a ship filled with the wind, en-
 “ compassed the body of the martyr, as in a circle; who stood
 “ in the midst of it, not as flesh, which is burnt, but bread,
 “ which is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace:
 “ and so sweet a smell issued from him all the while, as if it
 “ had been the smoke of frankincense or some rich spices.
 “ At length, when these wicked men saw, that his body could
 “ not be consumed by fire, they commanded the executioner
 “ to draw near, and to thrust his sword into him; which
 “ being done accordingly, there came out of his Body *a Dove*,
 “ and so great a quantity of blood, as quite extinguished the
 “ fire: so that the whole multitude were amazed, to see so
 “ great a difference between the Unbelievers, and the Elect [3].”

[1] Inter præcipua sacre antiquitatis insigniarint, testes habemus ipsos illos monumenta, quæ ex primis Ecclesiæ temporibus, ad nostram ætatem pervenerunt, jure merito computatur illa egregia epistola, quam de beati Polycarpi martyrio Ecclesia Smyrnenfis conscripsit. Ruinart. Act. Martyr. p. 28.

insigniarint, testes habemus ipsos illos Polycarpi Smyrneos. Dodw. Diff. Iren. 11. § xxxii.

[2] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. 8, 9. Apud Coteler. Patres Apost. T. 2. p. 198.

[3] Vid. ibid. c. 15, 16.

Quanta autem miracula hoc Martyrium

Yet it appears from the sequel of the narrative, that there was fire enough still left, to consume the body to ashes, which was executed with great care, that the Christians might not be able to preserve the least remains of it.

The greatest part of this Epistle is transcribed by *Eusebius*, who has omitted the mention of *the Dove*, which flew out of his body; for which reason *Mr. Dodwell* and *Archbishop Wake* have thought fit also to omit it. Yet all the oldest copies still extant, from which *Archbishop Usher*, *Cotelerius* and *Ruinart*, published their several editions, retain this passage [1]: which *Eusebius* might probably drop for the same reason, for which *Mr. Dodwell* and *Bishop Wake* also, profess to have dropt it; viz. for the sake of rendring the narrative *the less suspected* [2].

[1] *Præ aliis latinis versionibus, id habet Usseriana, quod omnium omnino aliarum longe antiquissima sit, utpote quæ non multo post Eusebii tempora facta fuerit: quamque existimat Usserius ipsam eandem fuisse, quæ olim in Ecclesia Gallicana legebatur. Ruinart. ib. p. 28. Vid. it. Euseb. Hist. Ecclæ. l. 4. c. 15.*

[2] *Nec enim illa urgemus, quæ de Columba habet Codex Usserianus, quæ nulla utique comparent in Eusebio aut Rufino, Nec enim supposititiis, suspectæve fidei monumentis immistis, verorum fidem censuimus derogandam. Dodw. Diss. Iren. 11. § xxxii.*

N. B. *Archbishop Wake* explaining his reasons for omitting the story of *the Dove*, says; "Now tho' there may seem to have been something of a foundation for such a miracle, in the rallery of *Lucian*, upon the death of *Peregrinus* the Philosopher, who burnt himself about the same time that *Polycarp* suffered, and from whose Funeral Pile he makes a *Vulture* to ascend, in opposition, it may be, to *Polycarp's Pigeon*, (if indeed he de-

signed, as a learned man has conjectured, under the story of that Philosopher, to ridicule the life and sufferings of *Polycarp*) yet I confess, I am so little a friend to such kind of Miracles, that I thought it better with *Eusebius*, to omit that circumstance, than to mention it from *Bp. Usher's* Manuscript, &c." [Prelim. Discour. p. 57.] which Manuscript however, he afterwards declares, to be so well attested, that we need not any farther assurance of the truth of it. p. 59.

These deaths of the Primitive Martyrs seldom failed of being accompanied by miracles, which, as we find them related in the old Martyrologies, were generally copied from each other: concerning sweet smells issuing from their bodies, and their wonderfull resistance of all kinds of torture; and the miraculous cures of their wounds and bruises, so as to tire their tormentors by the difficulty of destroying them, which yet, after a vain profusion of miracles, was always effected at the last.

To the end of this letter is annexed the following advertisement.

“ The Epistle was transcribed by *Carius*, from the copy of *Irenæus*, the disciple of *Polycarp*; and I, *Socrates*, transcribed it at *Corinth*. After which, I, *Pionius*, again wrote it out, from the copy above mentioned, having searched it out by the revelation of *Polycarp*, who directed me to it, &c.

Eusebius also relates a miracle, wrought by *Narcissus*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, about the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century: “ that when the sacred oil was almost spent, in the vigil of *Easter*, and the people were in a great consternation about it, he ordered those, who had the care of the lamps, to go and draw water from a certain well in the neighbourhood, and to bring it away to him: which being accordingly done, *Narcissus*, after he had prayed over it, commanded them to pour it into the lamps with a sincere faith in Christ, upon which, by a miraculous and divine power, the nature of the water was changed into the fatness of oil: of which oil, as *Eusebius* says, several small quantities were preserved by great numbers of the faithful, to his time, which was about an hundred years after the date of the miracle [1].”

The same historian, giving an account of the horrible barbarities, which were exercised upon the Christians of *Palæstine*, concludes one of his stories in the following manner; “ after these things had been transacted many days successively, this miracle appeared. There was a clear and bright sky, and a remarkable serenity of the air: when on a sudden, the pillars in the portico's of the City, poured out drops of tears; and when there was not the least moisture in the air,

[1] Παρὰ δὲ πλείοις τῶν ἀδελφῶν τι δειγµα τῷ τότε θαύματι φυλαχθέν ἐπὶ μήρισον ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ εἰς ἡµᾶς βραχύνει. Hist. Eccl. 6. 9.

“ the streets and public places were all wet, no body knew
 “ how, as if water had been thrown upon them: so that it
 “ became a common talk, that the earth wept for the impiety,
 “ which was committed; and to reprove the relentless and
 “ savage nature of men, stones, and inanimate bodies shed
 “ tears for what had happened [1].” A description of this
 kind, might easily be excused in an Orator or a Poet, but when
 an Historian, after he has raised our attention, and prepared
 us to expect something great and miraculous, tells us onely,
of stones shedding tears for the impieties of men, he debases the gra-
 vity of History, and makes miracles themselves contemptible.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as I have before said, has, with great dili-
 gence, deduced the History of the primitive miracles, down
 to these very times of *Eusebius*; which he then shuts up with
 the establishment of Christianity by human laws, declaring,
 “ that many things concurred to recommend the credit of the
 “ preceding ages, which have no place in those, that followed
 “ [2]:” and speaking of the life of *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-*
worker, written by *Gregory of Nyssa*, a Bishop of the greatest
 piety and gravity, he says, “ in this Life there are many
 “ things, which breath the air of imposture and the genius of
 “ the fourth century, so that I dare not mix them with what
 “ is more genuin, for fear of hurting the credit of all [3].” For
 this reason therefore, it was my first intention to confine my
 inquiries also to the same period; but having since perceived,
 that several of our learned Divines and principal advocates of
 the Christian faith have not scrupled, to assert the succession

[1] ΕΦ' ΟΙΣ ΠΛΕΙΣΑΙΣ ΗΜΕΡΑΙΣ ΙΠΠΙΤΙΔΗ-
 ΜΕΝΟΙΣ, ΤΟΥΤΟΝ ΤΙ ΠΑΡΑΪΔΟΧΟΝ ΣΥΜΒΑΙΝΕΙ.
 Ibid. c. ix. p. 425,

[2] Multa enim faciunt ad primorum Se-
 culorum commendandam fidem, quæ locum

in sequentium seculorum testimoniis pro-
 sus nullum habent. Dissert. Iren. 2. § 62.

[3] Fateor ibi multa legi, quarti, in
 quo vixit Gregorius, seculi, Impostorum-
 que genium referentia. &c. ibid. § 55.

of true miracles, to the end even of the fifth century, I thought it necessary, to extend my argument to the same length, lest I should seem to neglect any evidence, which could be offered to me, and especially such, as is declared to be *convincing* and *decisive* by men of their character. But from every step, that we advance forward, we shall readily perceive, that Mr. *Dodwell*, who had as much piety and more learning, than any of them, has in this respect shewn more judgement too, by restraining the miraculous powers of the Church to the three first centuries.

In the fourth century, we find some of the principal Fathers delivering themselves on this subject so variously and inconsistently, as shews, that tho' they were ashamed to deny, what they knew to be true, yet they were desirous to inculcate, what they knew to be false. For on some occasions, when they are pressed, they plainly confess, that miracles were then ceased; yet on others, they appeal to them again as common, and performed among them every day. For example, *St. Chrysostom* observes, "that in the infancy of the Church, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were bestowed even on the unworthy, because those early times stood in need of that help, for the more easy propagation of the Gospel; but now, says he, they are not given even to the worthy, because the present strength of the Christian faith is no longer in want of them [1]." In another place, speaking of the miraculous powers of the Apostles, and of the force, which they had in converting the Gentile world, "wherefore," adds he, because no miracles are wrought now, we are not to take it for a proof, that none were wrought then; for

[1] Νῦν δὲ οὐκ ἀξιότις διδόναι, ἡ γὰρ *συνμαχίας*. Op. T. 3. p. 65. Edit. Bened.
ἰσχύς τῆς πίστεως ἐκείναι ταύτης δύναιτο τῆς

“ then they were of use, but now they are not: for the first
 “ planters of the Gospel were simple and ignorant men, and
 “ had nothing to teach from themselves; but what they received
 “ from God, that they delivered to the world: so we likewise
 “ of these times, bring nothing indeed of our own, but what
 “ we received from them, that we declare to all.—Nor do
 “ we yet persuade by the force of our reason, but evince the
 “ truth of our doctrines from the holy Scriptures, and the
 “ miracles then wrought in confirmation of them [1].” Again,
 speaking of the Jews, in our Saviour’s time, who *desired a sign*,
 he says, “ there are some also even now, who desire and ask,
 “ why are not miracles performed still at this day? and why
 “ are there no persons, who raise the dead and cure diseases?”
 To which he replies, “ that it was owing to the want of faith
 “ and virtue and piety in those times [2].” On another occa-
 sion also he declares, “ that St. Paul’s Handkerchiefs could
 “ once do greater miracles, than all the Christians of his days
 “ could do, with ten thousand prayers and tears [3].” Lastly,
 in *his books of consolation*, addressed to his friend *Stagirus*, who
 was supposed to be possessed and horribly tormented by an evil
 spirit, it is expressly signified, “ that neither the tombs of the
 “ Martyrs, to which he had often applied for relief, nor the
 “ repeated endeavours of the most holy and celebrated Exor-
 “ cists of those days, were able to drive the Devil out of
 “ him [4].

There

[1] Ibid. Op. T. x. p. 45, 46.

[2] Καὶ γὰρ τῶν νῦν εἰσὶν οἱ ῥητορικῶς καὶ
 λόγιαι, διὰ τὴν μὴ τῶν νῦν ἐπιστάτην γινώσκαι.
 &c. lb. T. 8. p. 138. A. it. T. xi. p. 387,
 388.

[3] Id &c Sacerdot. l. 4. Op. T. i. p.
 411. A.

[4] Ad Stagir. lib. 1. Oper. T. i. p.
 179. A.

N. B. St. Chrysostom is thought to have
 written these books to *Stagirus*, about
 A. D. 380; which Mr. *Whiston* recom-
 mends, as very curious, and well worth
 the perusal of inquisitive men. [See Dæmo-
 niacs,

There are several other passages in this Father of the same strain; in which he allows the cessation of miracles, and speaks of

nians, p. 60.] I have run them slightly over, and shall give the reader a short abstract, of what I chiefly collected from them, since it relates to my present subject, and helps still to illustrate the true character and principles of this fourth age.

Stagirius was the Son and Heir of a noble family in *Antioch*, trained up in the Christian Religion; who, in contradiction to the will, and earnest remonstrances of his Father, had taken a resolution to enter into the Monastick life: for which purpose he seems to have withdrawn himself, in a secret manner, tho' with the privacy of his Mother, into a certain Monastery, where he lay concealed from the pursuit and discovery of his Father. On his first entrance however, he did not easily relish the rough discipline of the cloyster; but presuming on the splendor of his birth, expected some exemption from the severer parts of it; till being inured to it by degrees, and confirmed by the example and admonitions of the Elder Monks, he became equal to the most perfect of them in the frequency of his fastings and watchings, and all the other arts of mortifying his body. But now the Devil resolved, if possible, to shake his constancy, and attacked him with all that train of evils, which his power and malice could inflict: by which he reduced him at last to such a state of melancholy and despair, as made life itself insupportable to him. In this condition he laid open his complaints to his friends, and particularly to *St. Chrysostom*, by whom they are severally enumerated and summed up in the following manner.

1^{stly}, That in the former part of his life, while he lived like other men in the world, he never suffered any thing of this kind; but after he had crucified himself to the world, he presently fell under the sense of this disorder, which was sufficient to throw him into despair.

2^{dly}, That many, who, from a luxurious life, had been afflicted in the same way, were yet relieved in a short time, and restored to perfect health, so as to marry, and become the Fathers of many children, and enjoy all the other delights of the world, without ever relapsing into the same misery: whereas he who had spent so much time in fastings and watchings and the other austerities of the Monkish discipline, could find no respite from his affliction.

3^{dly}, That the holy man, who had shewn so much power in healing others in the same case, was not able to do him any service; neither he himself, nor any of the rest, who were with him, and more powerful even than he in these cures, but were all forced to go away with shame to themselves.

4^{thly}, That he was so oppressed on this account with grief and despair, as to be frequently tempted to hang, or drown, or throw himself from some precipice.

5^{thly}, That his companions, who entered with him into the same sort of life, continued to live at their ease and undisturbed, while he had no peace or rest, but was confined as it were to a prison,

of them even with contempt, " as proper onely to rouse the
 " dull and sluggish, but useless to men of philosophical minds;
 " that

of all others the most wretched, since no
 source of pain was so grievous as the
 shame, with which he was bound.

Secondly, That what chiefly disturbed and
 made him tremble even with fear, was,
 lest his Father should come to the know-
 ledge of his case, and do some great mis-
 chief to those holy men, who first received
 him; and trusting to his power and
 wealth, and hurried on by his passion,
 should attempt all sorts of violence against
 them. That his mother indeed had hitherto
 been able to conceal the matter from him,
 and elude the effect of his inquiries; but if
 he should happen to detect her dissimulation,
 his resentment would be intolerable both to
 her and to the Monks.

Lastly, That the completion of his
 misery was, to have no confidence or
 hope in what was to come: and not to
 know, whether he should ever find any
 cure or ease, since his expectations had
 been so often frustrated, by relapsing still
 into the same evil.

Now from this detail of his complaints,
 as they were represented by himself, what
 else can we collect, but that this noble
 Youth, disgusted perhaps by some little
 domestic uneasiness, had been seduced by
 certain Monks, to bid adieu to the world
 and retire into a Convent. In which
 retreat, by reflecting at leisure on the rash-
 ness of his resolution, and the provocation,
 which he had given by it to an indulgent
 Parent, he seems to have been
 stung with remorse: while the austerities,
 which he now practised, and by which

he hoped to calm his mind, and conciliate
 the favor of heaven, instead of appeasing,
 served onely to increase his anxiety, and
 reduced him by degrees to such a weakness
 and debility both of body and mind, as
 brought on horrible Symptoms, and Epi-
 leptic fits, and made him completely mi-
 serable. This naturally infused scruples
 and suspicions, which he himself gently
 intimates, that he was in a wrong way,
 and owed all his sufferings to his unhappy
 change of life; and that a return therefore
 to the world, where he had never felt
 any such, would free him from them
 again, by affording him the comforts of
 matrimony, and children, and all the
 other sweets of social life.

That this was the real case and source
 of his complaints, is evident from his own
 account of them. Let us see then what
 sort of comfort St. *Chrysostom* thought fit
 to administer to him in this sad state.
 This holy Father had himself also, when
 young, taken the same resolution of re-
 tiring from the world; in consequence of
 which, after he had spent several years in
 a Monastery, he betook himself to the
 mountains, where he lived, as an Hermit,
 in a solitary cave, for two years more:
 till perceiving at last, that the infirmity of
 his body, could no longer indure the seve-
 rity of that discipline, he quitted his soli-
 tude, and chose to reside in *Antioch*, where
 he is supposed to have written this elabo-
 rate consolation to *Stagirius*. But tho' he
 left the *Ascetic life* himself, when he
 found it hurtfull to his health, he never
 once suggests the same advice to his friend
Stagirius, nor ever mentions the onely
 remedy, which could afford him any solid
 comfort,

“ that they were frequently liable to sinister suspicions, of
 “ being mere phantasms and illusions, and that it was a proof
 “ of

comfort; viz. to quit the place and way of life, which had given birth to all his troubles; and to reconcile himself to his Father, by returning to the world, and by the use of it's innocent pleasures, to calm the disorders of his mind, and restore it to it's former tranquillity.

This, I say, was the most rational and effectual comfort which could be administered to him; but instead of this, St. Chrysostom employs all his rhetoric to persuade him, that his sufferings were the sure marks of the divine favor, and had been of the greatest service to him: that he could not but remember, on his first entrance into the Monastery, and before the Devil began to vex him, how difficult he found it, to comply with the rules of the society; how haughty and sluggish he was; how hard to be roused from his bed; and how angry with those, who disturbed him: but from the time of this trial and struggle with the Devil, all that difficulty was at an end, and no man surpassed him in all those austerities and exercises of devotion, which constitute the perfection of the Christian life. He exhorts him therefore to persevere in his fastings and watchings, and all his other mortifications, as the only means of baffling all these efforts and terrors, by which the Devil was laboring to drive him from that blessed course. That while he was immersed in the pleasures of the world, or was yet a novice and raw in the Monastic life, God would not expose him to this trial, nor suffer the Devil to attack him; knowing, that he would then be an unequal match, and fall an easy prey to the Adversary: but now that he was become

firm and perfect in all his exercises, God committed him to the Stadium, as an expert champion; and sure to come off with glory from the combat. That as to the trouble, which he suffered on the account of his Father, it was a weakness, he should not afflict himself for what might or might not happen hereafter: that his Father perhaps would never come to the knowledge of his case; or if he did, would be so much disturbed at it, as he imagined: that a man of his temper, fond of vain expences, and jovial company, puffed with pride, and haughtiness, and enslaved to a Concubine, whom he kept in his house, would have but little concern for the distress of a Son. That he had shewn this already by experiments; for tho' he had once loved him with the utmost tenderness, and above all things in the world, yet all that love was extinguished, upon his entrance into the monastery; which his Father declared to be a baseness, unworthy of his Ancestors, and disgraceful to the splendor of his Family. It was probable therefore, that he would rejoice at his calamity, and think it a punishment of his disobedience to him, in betaking himself to a way of life, from which he had labored so earnestly to dissuade him. —In short the Summ of St. Chrysostom's consolation is this; *that the more Stagirius suffered in this conflict, the more assured he might be, that he was under the peculiar care of heaven; and that by finding no relief, either from the tombs of the Martyrs, which he had so often visited, or from his long abode with those holy Exorcists, who had never failed of success before, he had a clear demonstration of God's particular regard for him.*

“ of the greater generosity of that age, to take God’s word
“ without such pledges [1].

From these testimonies, one would necessarily conclude, upon the authority of *St. Chrysostom*, that miracles were ceased in his days: yet in other parts of his works we find him in a different story, and haranguing on the mighty wonders, which were performed among them every day, by the reliques of the *Martyrs*, in casting out Devils, curing all diseases, and drawing whole Cities and people to their Sepulchers [2]. He displays also the miraculous cures, wrought by the use of consecrated oil, and by the sign of the Cross: which last he calls a defence against all evil, and a medicine against all sickness, and affirms it to have been miraculously impressed, in his own time, on people’s garments [3].

him; who would never have hindered the effect of so much grace, nor exposed his own servants to so much shame, if he had not known it conducive to the greater good and probation of Stagirius.

Such were the arts, by which the Saints of this fourth age were subjecting the world to the tyranny of superstition. Not content to make men Christians, they could not rest, till they had made them also Monks; till they had persuaded them, that the onely way of serving God, was, by rendering themselves useless to man; and of saving their souls, by doing mischief to their bodies. By this senseless cant, they made it their business, to gain the Mothers chiefly in the first place, and through them, their children: especially those of the rich and the great; without the least regard to the will of their fathers, the distress of their families, the breach of filial duty, or the ruin which they wrought to the health, the fortunes, and the happiness of those, whom they insnared. We find several other instances of this kind in

the works of this same *Chrysostom*, concerning the heirs of rich families, stolen away from their fathers by the artifices of Monks, which, as he himself informs us, raised such a clamor and indignation against the whole Monkish Order, among the generality of the better sort, as transported them almost to madness; to see their children decoyed from them into a life, which they considered as utterly sordid and despicable. It was for the sake of appeasing these clamors, that he composed his three books, against the Oppugners of the Monkish life; one of which is addressed to the believing, and another to the unbelieving Fathers, in order to convince them both, of the excellence of this divine philosophy, as it was called, and of the happiness accruing to their sons, from their choice and pursuit of it.

[1] Vid. Oper. T. 5. p. 455, 271. it. T. 7. 375. E. 376. B. &c.

[2] Ibid. T. 3. p. 338, 339.

[3] Ibid. T. xi. p. 387. A. it. T. 5. p. 271. D.

St. *Austin* also, who lived at the same time, tho' in a different part of the world, takes notice of the same objection, made by the Sceptics, with which the Christians were commonly urged in this age. "They ask us, says he, *why are not those miracles performed now, which you declare to have been wrought formerly?*" I could tell them, that they were then necessary, before the world believed, for this very purpose, that the world might believe; but he, who still requires prodigies, that he may become a believer, is himself a great prodigy, who does not believe now, when the world does believe [1]." One would not imagine, that these words, which seem to imply a cessation of miracles, were the preface to an elaborate narrative and solemn attestation of great numbers of them, said to have been wrought in these very times: which, if true, as they are here affirmed by St. *Austin* from his own knowledge, must have been more illustrious, both for the number and excellence of them, than all, which were wrought by the Apostles themselves.

But before we descend to particulars, I cannot forbear observing, what this Father has delivered concerning the general state and credit of them among the Christians themselves, at the very time, when they were wrought. He tells us then, "that tho' miracles were frequently wrought, either by the name of *Jesus*, or by his *Sacraments*, or by the *prayers* or the *memorials of the Martyrs*; yet the fame of them was not so illustrious, as of those of the Apostles: since they were scarce ever known to the whole City or place, where they happened to be performed; but for the most part, to a very

[1] Cur, inquit, nunc illa miracula, quæ predicatis facta esse, non sunt? possem quidem dicere, necessaria prius fuisse, quam crederet mundus, ad hoc, ut crederet mundus. Quisquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquit, magnum est ipse prodigium, qui, mundo credente, non credit. D. Civ. Dei. l. 22. c. 8.

“ few onely; while all the rest were utterly ignorant of them;
 “ especially if the city was large: and if ever they were told
 “ abroad to other people, yet they were not recommended
 “ with such authority, as to be received without difficulty
 “ and doubting, tho’ reported by true believers, to true be-
 “ lievers [1].

That he might put an end therefore to this strange negligence of the Christians, with regard to their own miracles, he took care, as oft as he heard of any miracle, “ that the parties
 “ concerned in it should be examined, and a verbal proces, or
 “ authentic narrative be drawn of the fact, which was afterwards publicly read to the people. Yet all this caution, as
 “ he says, was not sufficient to make the miracles known, or at
 “ all regarded: because those, who were present at the recital
 “ of such narratives, heard them but once, while the greater
 “ part were absent: and even those, who heard them, retained
 “ nothing, a few days after, of what they had heard, and
 “ seldom or never took the pains, to tell it to any body else,
 “ whom they knew to be absent [2].” This account of the matter would be very surprizing, were it not explained to us by the miracles themselves; of which I have here added a few specimens, whence we shall easily collect the reason of that coldness and indifference, which the people of those days expressed towards them.

For instance, among many other stories of the same kind, he relates these, which follow: “ a pious old Cobler of *Hippo*,

[1] Nam etiam nunc sunt miracula, in ejus nomine, five per sacramenta ejus, five per orationes vel memorias Sanctorum ejus, sed non eadem claritate illustrantur — & quando alibi, aliisque narrantur, non tanta ea commendat auctoritas, ut sine difficultate, vel dubitatione credantur, quamvis

Christianis fidelibus a fidelibus indicentur. Ibid. § 1.

[2] Ut nec illi, qui adfuerunt, post aliquot dies, quod audierunt, mente retineant; & vix quisquam reperiatur illorum, qui ei, quem non adfuisse cognoverit, indicet quod audivit. Ibid. § 21.

“ where

“ where he himself was Bishop, having lost his old coat, and
 “ wanting money to buy a new one, betook himself to ~~the~~
 “ *twenty Martyrs*, whose chappel or memorial was famous in
 “ that city; where he prayed to them very earnestly, that he
 “ might be enabled by them to get some cloaths. Some young
 “ Fellows, who overheard him, began to make sport with
 “ him, and pursued him with their scoffs, for begging money
 “ to buy a coat. But as the old man walked away, without
 “ minding them, he saw a large fish lie gasping on the shore,
 “ which he caught by the help of the young men, and sold
 “ to a Christian Cook, for three hundred pence; and laying
 “ out the money on wool, set his wife to work, to provide
 “ cloaths for him: but the Cook, cutting open the fish,
 “ found a gold ring also in the belly of it; which, out of
 “ compassion to the poor man, and the terror also of religion,
 “ he presently carried to the Cobler, saying, *see here is the*
 “ *cloathing, which the twenty Martyrs have given you* [1].

“ There was one *Hesperius* likewise, as he tells us, a man
 “ of Tribunician quality, whose country house near *Hippo* was
 “ haunted by evil spirits, and his cattle also and servants
 “ afflicted by them: upon which he sent a message to the
 “ Priests at *Hippo*, when *Austin* happened to be absent, that
 “ some of them would come over to him, and drive the evil
 “ Spirits away by their prayers. One of them accordingly
 “ went, and offered *the sacrifice of Christ's body* upon the spot,
 “ praying at the same time, as fervently as he was able,
 “ that this vexation might be removed; upon which by God's
 “ mercy it instantly ceased [2].

“ The same *Hesperius* had received from a friend some *holy*

[1] Ad viginti Martyres, quorum Memoria apud nos est celeberrima, clara voce, ut vestiretur, oravit, &c. ib. § 9.

[2] Ib. §. 6.

“ *earth*, brought from *Jerusalem*, where Christ rose from his
 “ grave on the third day; which earth he hung up in his bed-
 “ chamber, to secure himself from the mischief of those evil
 “ spirits. But since his house was now cleared of them, he
 “ was considering, what he should do with this earth, being
 “ unwilling, out of reverence to it, to keep it any longer in his
 “ bedchamber. It happened, that St. *Austin* and another
 “ Bishop, called *Maximinus*, were then in the neighbourhood;
 “ so that *Hesperius* sent them an invitation to come to his
 “ house; which they immediately accepted; and after he had
 “ acquainted them with the whole affair, he desired, that *the*
 “ *sacred earth* might be deposited somewhere in the Ground,
 “ and an Oratory built over it, where the Christians might
 “ assemble for the performance of divine service: the two
 “ Bishops had no objection, so that his Project was presently
 “ executed. There was at the same place a country lad,
 “ afflicted with the palsy; who having heard what was done,
 “ begged of his parents, that they would carry him without
 “ delay to that holy place, whither as soon as he was brought,
 “ he put up his prayers, and presently returned back on foot
 “ in perfect health [1].”

There are many more tales of this sort, as contemptible, as
 any, in the Popish legends, and all attested by this celebrated
 Father, from his own knowledge: yet these are nothing to
 the extravagant things, which he goes on to relate, of *the re-*
liques of the Martyr Stephen. For as *reliques* were now become
 the most precious treasure of the Church, so these of St. *Stephen*,
 after they had lain buried and unknown for near four centu-
 ries, were reveled in a vision, to one *Lucianus* a Priest, by Ga-
 maliel, the celebrated Dr. of the law, at whose feet St. Paul had

been bred, and being found by his direction, were removed with great solemnity and many miracles into *Jerusalem* [1]. The fame of these reliques was soon spread through the Christian world; and many little portions of them brought away by holy Pilgrims, to enrich the particular Churches of their own countries. For wherever any reliques were deposited, an Oration or Chappel was always built over them, which was called a *Memorial* of that Martyr, whose reliques it contained. Several reliques therefore of *St. Stephen* having been brought by different people into *Afric*, as many memorials of him were consequently erected in different places, of which three were peculiarly famous, one at *Hippo*, where *St. Austin* was Bishop, a second at *Calama*; and a third at *Uxalis*, two other Episcopal Cities; and many great and illustrious miracles were continually wrought in them all.

St. Austin has given us a particular relation of some of them, by which the gout, the stone, and fistula's were instantly cured; the blind restored to sight; and five different persons raised even from death to life. Two of whom were carried dead to the reliques, and brought back alive: two more restored to life, by the virtue of their garments onely, which had touched the reliques; and a fifth, by the oil of the martyr's lamps. After all which wonderfull stories, he adds the following apology, not for telling us so many of them, but so few, out of the infinite number, which were publicly known and recorded.

“ What shall I do? says he: I am engaged by promise, to
“ finish the present work, so that it is not possible for me in

[1] The history of this revelation of *St. Stephen's reliques*, and of the miracles, which were wrought by them, is particularly delivered by several antient writers, whose pieces are annexed, as an Appen-

dix to the seventh Volume of *St. Austin*. Edit. Benedict. And the same revelation is referred to likewise by *St. Austin* himself in different parts of his works.

“ this place, to relate all the miracles, which I know; and
 “ our people without doubt, when they read these, will be
 “ grieved, that I have omitted so many, which they know to
 “ be true, as well as I. But I beg them to excuse me, and
 “ to consider what a tedious piece of work it would be, to do
 “ that, which the nature of my argument does not oblige me
 “ to do here. For were I to relate onely the miracles of cures,
 “ without mentioning the rest, which have been performed
 “ by this Martyr, the most glorious *Stephen*, in the colony of
 “ *Calama*, and in our own, it would fill a great number of
 “ volumes. Nor would it be possible to collect them all, but
 “ such of them onely, of which certificates have been made,
 “ and read to the people. For this I ordered to be done,
 “ when I saw the effects of the divine powers, like to those of
 “ the antients, so frequently exerted also in our own times,
 “ which ought not to be lost from the notice of the multitude.
 “ It is not yet two years, since this Memorial was founded at
 “ *Hippo*, and tho’ I am certain, that no account was taken
 “ of many of the miracles, yet at the time, when I wrote
 “ this, the number of certificates publicly made, amounted
 “ to near seventy: but at *Calama*, where the Memorial is of
 “ longer standing, and certificates more frequently taken,
 “ they reach to a far greater number.

“ At *Uzalis* also, we know many eminent miracles wrought
 “ by the same Martyr; whose Memorial was instituted there
 “ by their Bishop *Ezodius*, much earlier than with us. But
 “ it is not the custom with them to take certificates, or it was
 “ not rather, because now it is probably begun. For when I
 “ was lately there, I exhorted *Petronia*, a celebrated Matron,
 “ who had been miraculously cured of a great and lingering
 “ illness, in which the Physicians were not able to help her,

“ to get a certificate drawn of the case, and read publicly to
 “ the people, to which, by the advice also of the said Bishop
 “ of the place, she willingly consented, and inserted in it ano-
 “ ther miracle, which notwithstanding the haste, that I am in,
 “ to put an end to this work, I cannot forbear relating,
 “ &c [1].

I have dwelt the longer on these miracles, than the importance of them perhaps may be thought to require: but they are so precisely described and authentically attested by one of the most venerable Fathers in all antiquity, who affirms them to have been wrought within his own knowledge, and under his own eyes, that they seem of all others the best adapted, to evince the truth of what I have been advancing, and to illustrate the real character of all the other miracles of the primitive times, both before and after them. Dr. *Chapman* however, speaking of the very same miracles, roundly declares them all, *to be so strongly attested, both by the effects, and the relators of them, that to doubt their reality, were to doubt the evidence of sense* [2]. On these then, I am content to rest the fate of my whole argument; and if either Dr. *Chapman* or Dr. *Berriman* can maintain these miracles to be credible, shall no longer dispute the credibility of any, from the Apostolic times, down to our own. But, on the other hand, if miracles so strictly examined by a most Holy Bishop, confirmed by the certificates of eye-witnesses, and rehearsed publicly to the people, at the time when they are said to have been wrought cannot command our belief, these Doctors must needs confess, nay, they have already confessed, that the Christian Church can shew no other, except those of Christ, and his Apostles, which can make any better pretensions to it.

[1] De Civ. Dei. l. 22. c. 8. § 20, 21.

[2] Miscell. Tracts, p. 174.

For not to insist on the objections, which might reasonably be made to the probability of the facts themselves; to the incompetency of the instruments, by which, and of the ends, for which they are said to have been performed; to the credulity of a prejudiced, or the fidelity rather of an artfull and interested relator; it seems evident, from the neglect, with which they were treated by the Christians themselves; from the obscurity in which they lay; from the diligence of St. *Austin*, to search them out; to get certificates of them; and to publish them to the people; and from the insufficiency of all his pains, to make them still regarded or at all remembered; that the people themselves saw or suspected the cheat, and were tired with the repeated frauds of this kind, which their Bishops were imposing upon them. For it is not possible to conceive any other reason of so surprizing a coldness, in a case of all others the most warming, but a general persuasion, grounded on experience, that these pretended miracles were nothing else but forgeries, contrived to enforce some favorite doctrine or rite, which the rulers of the Church were desirous to establish.

Yet these are not the stories, which chiefly shock Mr. *Dodwell*, and oblige him to reject the miracles of the fourth Century; but others still more extravagant, tho' attested likewise by persons of equal eminence and authority; by St. *Atbanasius*, St. *Gregory of Nyssa*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Epiphanius*, &c. Of which therefore, it will be necessary to add a specimen or two, from each of those Fathers.

St. *Atbanasius*, in the Preface to his life of St. *Antony* the Monk, declares, " that he had inserted nothing in it, but what
 " he either knew to be true, having often seen the Saint him-
 " self, or what he had learnt from one, who had long mini-
 " stered

“ stered to him, and poured water upon his hands [1]. In this life then, after a great number of monstrous stories, concerning the personal conflicts, which this Saint continually sustained with all the several Devils, and powers of Hell, who assaulted him in every shape, which could imprint terror, and exerted every art and even corporal punishments, to drive him from the Monastic life, which threatened the speedy ruin of their Kingdom, he tells us; “ that some body knocking one “ day at his Cell, *Antony* went to the door, where he saw a tall “ meager person, who being asked his name, answered, *that* “ *he was Satan*.—His business, it seems, was, to beg a truce “ of the Saint, and to expostulate with him, on account of “ the perpetual reproaches and curses, which the Monks so “ undeservedly bestowed upon him, when he was no longer “ in condition to give them any trouble: for since the desert “ was now filled with Monks, and the Christians spread into “ all places, he was disarmed of all power to do them any “ mischief: so that the Christians had nothing more to do, “ but to take care of themselves, and to forbear their needless “ curses against him [2].” The rest of this piece is filled with many other miracles of the same stamp, too trifling to deserve any regard.

St. *Gregory* of *Nyssa*, in the life of his Namesake, called the Wonder-worker, has this story, “ that the *Virgin Mary*, “ accompanied by St. *John* the Evangelist, appeared to *Gregory* “ in a vision, and explained to him the mystery of Godliness, “ in a short Creed or divine summary of faith, which he took “ down in writing, as they dictated it to him, and left the

[1] Διὰ τῆτο ἄπερ αὐτὸς τὴ γνώσκω (πολλάκις γὰρ αὐτὸν ἰώρακα) καὶ ἃ μα-
θεῖν ἠδυνήθη παρὰ τῆ ἀκολληθείσας αὐ-
τῷ χρόνον ἐκ ὧσαν—χεράσαι τῇ εὐλα-

βεία ὑμῶν ἐσπένδασα. *Oper. T. 2. p. 451.*
Edit. Par.

[2] *Ibid* p. 476.

“ copy of it, a legacy to the Church of *Neocæsarea*, of which
 “ he was Bishop: and if any one, says he, has a mind to be
 “ satisfied of the truth of this, let him inquire of that Church,
 “ in which the very words, as they were written by his blessed
 “ hand, are preserved to this day: which, for the excellency
 “ of the divine grace, may be compared with those tables of
 “ the law, made by God and delivered to *Moses* [1].

Dr. *Waterland* has given us a translation of this Creed, and
 Dr. *Berriman*, an abstract of it; which is *as express as possible*,
 they say, *for the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was taught afterwards*
by Athanasius. They both however intimate, that the genuine-
 ness of the Creed had been called in quæstion, tho’ without any
 sufficient cause [2]. Yet the learned *Cave*, who for zeal, and
 orthodoxy, and facility of believing, was scarce inferior to any,
 declares, *that notwithstanding the authority of Gregory Nyssen,*
who was apt to be too credulous, this short exposition of the Christian
faith will hardly find credit with prudent and sensible men [3]. But
 whatever may be alledged to persuade us, that this Creed was
 actually professed and taught by *Gregory*, in his Church of
Neocæsarea, yet no man surely but Dr. *Berriman*, could have
 any scruple to own, that the story of the vision, and of it’s
 delivery to him from heaven, was a forgery, contrived to sup-
 port the *Athanasian doctrine*, at a time when it was warmly
 controverted, and in danger of being suppressed. But as the
 revelation of it, if admitted to be true, would put an end at
 once to all dispute, and give a divine Sanction to the Doctrine
 itself, so the Dr. seems resolved not to part with it: for in his
Historical account of the Trinitarian controversy, speaking on this

[1] Vid. Greg. Nyss. Vit. S. Greg. Thaumaturg. p. 978. Op. T. 2. Ed. Par. Historic. Acc. of the Trinitar. Controvers. p. 138, 141.

[2] See Waterland. Import. of the Doct. of the Trin. p. 232. And Berrim. [3] Vid. Hiflor. Litterar. In Vita Greg. Thaumaturgi. p. 132.

very point, he says; “there are many arguments to convince us of the genuineness and authority of this Creed of St. Gregory: I do not mean of it’s being taught him by revelation, (tho’ that may be well attested too, and will not seem incredible to those, who shall consider, how highly this great person was distinguished by the charismata, or extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost) but I mean, as to the certainty, of it’s having been taught by St. Gregory, &c. [1].” From which we see, that tho’ his sole business in this place was, to prove the Creed to have been really Gregory’s, yet he could not forbear to acquaint us, that, if there was occasion, he could prove *the revelation* also to be genuine: since it cannot enter into his head, how any one should think it incredible, that, in those miraculous ages, a person of Gregory’s exalted character might be favored with a visit from heaven, by the *Virgin Mary* and St. *John the Apostle*.

The same Gregory of Nyssa relates likewise, “how his Name-fake, being upon a journey, was forced one night, to take shelter in an Heathen Temple, famed for an Oracle and divination; where the Dæmons used to appear visibly and offer themselves to the Priests. But the holy Father, by invoking the name of *Jesus*, put them all to flight; and by making the Sign of the Cross, purified the air, polluted by the steam of their sacrifices—the next morning when the Priest came to perform his usual functions; the Devils appeared, and acquainted him, that they had been driven out the night before by a stranger, and had not the power to return: nor was he able to recall them by all the charms of his expiatory sacrifices. Upon this, the Priest pursued Gregory in great wrath, and overtaking him on the road,

[1] Berrim. Ibid. p. 138.

“ threatened him most terribly, for what he had done. But
 “ Gregory, despising his threats, gave him to understand,
 “ that he had a power superior to that of Devils, and could
 “ drive them whithersoever he pleased. The Priest amazed at
 “ what he said, began to beg, that for a proof of his power,
 “ he would fetch them back again into the Temple; to which
 “ Gregory consenting, wrote this short note onely, upon a
 “ Schedule of paper, *Gregory to Satan, Enter.* With this, the
 “ Priest was dismissed; and laying the little Schedule upon the
 “ Altar, brought the Devils back again immediacly to their
 “ old Seats.” The miracle however had the good effect of con-
 “ verting the Pagan Priest [1].

I have already given a passage from the Life of St. *Hilarion*
 “ the Monk, written by St. *Jerom*, as a specimen of the fide-
 “ lity of the writer.—But for a proof of the fabulous genius
 “ of the fourth century, Mr. *Dodwell* refers us to another Life
 “ of the *Hermit Paul*, compiled by the same Father, which is
 “ filled with stories still more monstrous; “ of *Satyrs and Fauns*
 “ presenting themselves to the Hermit, and confessing their
 “ own mortality, and the folly of the Gentiles in paying them
 “ any worship, and begging his recommendation of them to
 “ their common Lord, who came to save the world: of a raven
 “ bringing half a loaf for sixty years successively to the Her-
 “ mit, for his daily food in the wilderness; and then a whole
 “ loaf, when St. *Antony* came to visit him: of two Lions, coming
 “ to assist *Antony* in the burial of *Paul*, by digging a grave for
 “ him with their feet, and then departing with the blessing of
 “ *Antony* [2].”

[1] Vid. Greg. Nyss. *ibid.* p. 981.

Tom. 4. par. 2. pag. 71. Edit. Benedic.

[2] Hieron. Vit. Pauli *Eremit.* Oper.

St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, who is said to have wrought miracles himself, both in his life-time and after it [1], affirms several false and absurd miracles from his own knowledge, which his advocates gently pass over, by remarking onely, that *this most holy Father was too credulous, or not so accurate*, as we could wish [2]. He declares, “that in imitation of our Saviour’s miracle at *Cana in Galilee*, several fountains and rivers in his days “were annually turned into wine. A fountain of *Cibyra* a City “of *Caria*, says he, and another at *Gerasa* in *Arabia*, prove the “truth of this. I myself have drunk out of the fountain of *Cibyra*, and my brethren, out of the other at *Gerasa*: and many “testify the same thing of the river *Nile* in *Egypt* [3].” Should we then be asked here, as we were before in a similar case; *will ye not believe a most holy Bishop, in a fact attested by his own senses?* the answer is clear and short; *the fact is not credible.*

St. Chrysostom, celebrating the acts of the Martyr St. *Babylas*, Bishop of *Antioch*, says: “the Gentiles will laugh, to hear me “talk of the acts of persons dead, and buried, and consumed “to dust; but they are not to imagine, that the bodies of “Martyrs, like to those of common men, are left destitute of all “active force and energy, since a greater power than that of “the human soul is superadded to them, the power of the Holy “Spirit; which, by working miracles in them, demonstrates “the truth of the resurrection.”——He then proceeds to inform us, “how the remains of this Martyr were removed

[1] Vid. Vit. Epiphan. c. 37, 66, &c. Op. Tom. 2. p. 350. Edit. Par.

[2] Quæ de Melchisedeci parentibus narrat Epiphanius, redolent apocryphorum somnia, cujusmodi multa sunt in hoc opere bona fide a Sanctissimo Patre descripta. Petav. Not. in pag. 217. Tom. 2.

Majori fide digna, quam quæ habet alia

pleraque Pater ille parum accuratus. Dodw. Differ. Iren. 2. § 29.

[3] Περὶ ὧν καμὲν ἀπὸ τῆς Κιβύρας, ἡμέτεροι δὲ ἀδελφοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν Γεράσῃ πηγῆς——καὶ πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ περὶ τῆς Νείλου τῶτο μαρτυροῦσι. Adv. Hæres. l. 2. cxxx. p. 451. Tom. 1.

“ by a certain Emperor, out of the City of *Antiöch*, into a
 “ suburb of it, called *Daphne*, famous for the delights of it’s
 “ situation, and the variety of pleasures, which it afforded
 “ to it’s inhabitants, as well as for a celebrated Temple and
 “ Oracle of *Apollo Daphneus*; to which the body of the Saint
 “ was thought proper to be removed, for the sake of giving
 “ some check to the lewdness and licentiousness, that reigned
 “ in the place. The Coffin therefore was no sooner deposited
 “ in a chappel provided for it, than the Oracle of *Apollo* was
 “ struck dumb at once: so that when *Julian* the Apostate
 “ came afterwards to consult it, he could receive no other
 “ answer from *Apollo*, but that the dead would not suffer him to
 “ speak any longer [1]. Wherefore *Julian* commanded the bones
 “ of *St. Babylas* to be conveyed back again into *Antiöch*; but
 “ in the very moment, when they entered into the City, the
 “ Statue of the God, and the roof of his Temple were destroyed
 “ by lightning, upon the intercession of the Saint [2].” *St. Chrysostom*
employs an intire Homily, and a larger discourse,
which follows it, in haranguing on this same subject of
Babylas; and on the blessings and dayly miracles, wrought by the
reliques of the Martyrs, to the edification of the Church, and
the confusion of unbelievers [3]. Yet his History of this
Saint is so evidently fabulous and romantic, that the
Benedictin Monks, who published the last and best edition of his works,
found it necessary to admonish the reader, that it is written in
a declamatory stile, overflowing with rhetorical figures, and for the

[1] “ By which answer we may understand, says *Sir If. Newton*, that some Christian was got into the place, where the Heathen Priests used to speak through a pipe in delivering their Oracles.” See *Observat on the Prophecies of Daniel*, par. 1. p. 210.

[2] Καὶ ὅτι ἐκ ἀπλῶς κομπάζω ταῦτα λέγω νῦν——ἴκανα μὲν τὸν λόγον πειρώσασθαι, καὶ τὰ καθ’ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ τῶν Μαθητῶν γινόμενα θαύματα. *Ibid.* p. 555.

[3] *Vid. Oper. Tom. 2. p. 531, 533, 534, 564, &c.*

most part destitute of truth [1]. In which those learned Papists have shewn more candor as well as judgement, than our Protestant Doctor *Cave*; who, in his *Life of the same Babylas*, after relating the particular story just described, which he calls *one of the most memorable occurrences, that Church antiquity has conveyed to us*, adds the following attestation to it.

“ The reader, ’tis like, may be apt to scruple this story, as
 “ favouring a little of superstition, and giving too much
 “ honor to the reliques of saints. To which I shall say no
 “ more, than that the credit of it seems unquæstionable;
 “ it being reported not onely by *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodo-*
 “ *ret*, who all lived very near that time, but by *Cbrysoſtom*,
 “ who was born at *Antioch*, and was a long time Presbyter
 “ of that Church, and was scholar there to *Libanius* the So-
 “ phist, at the very time when the thing was done, and an
 “ eye-witness of it; and who not onely preached the thing,
 “ but wrote a discourse against the Gentiles on this very sub-
 “ ject; where he appeals to the knowledge both of young and
 “ old then alive, who had seen it, and challenges them to stand
 “ up and contradict, if they could, the truth of what he re-
 “ lated. Nay, which farther puts the case past all peradven-
 “ ture, *Libanius* the Orator evidently confesses it, &c. [2]:
 Whereas all, which that Orator confesses, and which the Be-
 nedictins allow to be well grounded in the whole relation is,
 that the reliques of *Babylas* were carried back again, by *Julian’s*
 order, out of *Daphne* into the City; and that the Temple of
 the *Daphnean Apollo* was soon after destroyed in the night by

[1] Argumentum libri, est historia Mar-
 tyrii S. Babylæ—declamatorio more nar-
 rata, tropique redundans; in qua plerum-
 que veritatem desideres. Admonit. in

Serm. ibid. p. 530.

[2] See his *Lives of the Prim. Fathers*.
Life of Babyl. Vol. I. p. 247.

fire; which the Christians declared to have been sent from heaven by the power of the Saint; and the Heathens ascribed to the revenge and contrivance of the Christians [1].

A Popish writer, with whom I have been engaged, in order to reprove my railery on their fictitious Saints and Image-worship, has alledged also a most notable miracle, from this fourth century; which I shall here add to the Specimens already given.

“ When *Julian* the *Apostate* was pursuing his *Persian* expedition, and at the very time, when he is supposed to have been destroyed by the immediate hand of God, the Great *St. Basil* was standing before the *Image of the Blessed Virgin*, on which there was painted likewise the figure of *St. Mercurius*, an eminent Martyr: and while *St. Basil* was fervently praying, that the impious and atheistical *Julian* might be cut off, he received this revelation from the picture; out of which, the figure of the Martyr quite vanished for a little while, but presently appeared again, and held out a bloody spear: as a token of what had happened in the same moment to *Julian* [2].”

[1] *Julian* suspected the Christians to have set fire to this Temple, on the account of his removal of the body of *St. Babylas*: for which reason, he ordered some of them to be put to the rack, and their great Church in *Antioch* to be shut up; as we are told by *Ammianus Marcellinus*; who mentions another report also, tho' more slightly grounded, of a different cause of that accident. [1. 22. c. 13. Vid. it. *Julian*. *Misopogon*. Oper. T. 1. p. 361. Edit. Spanh. 1696.] The Christians, says *Sozomen*, took the fire to be sent from heaven at the request of the Martyr,

but the Gentiles look upon it as the act of the Christians, lib. 5. c. xx.

[2] Ἐξ ἧς εἰκόνος ἐμυήθη ταύτην τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν. ὥρα γὰρ πρὸς μὲν βραχὺ ἀφανῆ τὸν μάρτυρα, μί' ἑὸς πολὺ δὲ, τὸ δόρυ ἡμαρμίνον κατέχοντα, Joh. Damascen. Oper. T. 1. p. 327. E. Edit. Par. pr. Lequien.

N. B. This story is said to have been recorded by *Helladius*, the disciple and successor of *St. Basil*, in the Bishoprick of *Cæsarea*, in the *Life*, which he wrote of *St. Basil*.

But

But *Julian's* death was foretold likewise by *visions*, and *divine revelations*, as the Ecclesiastical writers inform us, to several other Saints and holy men, in different parts of the world, who were severally addressing their prayers to God for his destruction [1]. Whence we cannot but observe, what a total change there was, both of principles and practice, between the Fathers of the fourth, and those of the preceding ages; or between the Church when persecuted, and when established in power and authority. For in the earlier times, under the very worst of the Heathen Emperors, and the cruellest persecutors of the Church, when the Christians were treated every where, as traitors to the government, all their Apologists, through the three first centuries, declare with one voice, that they were obliged by the precepts of their religion, to be of all men the most loyal to their Princes, and that it was their daily practice, to put up their united prayers for their prosperity. We pray, says *Tertullian*, for every Emperor; that he may have a long life, secure reign, a safe house, strong armies, faithful Senate, honest people, a quiet world, and whatsoever else, man, or Cæsar himself can wish [2]. Yet after the Church had gained a firm establishment, its temper was quite altered; and the Emperors no sooner began to give them any disturbance, than their prayers were turned into curses; and the divine vengeance confessedly implored to destroy them. So true it is, what all the Popish writers have not scrupled to affirm, from *Pope Gregory the Great*, down to *Car-*

[1] Vid. Sozom. lib. 6. c. 2.

[2] Ὅθεν θεὸν μὲν μόνον προσκυνούμεν, ἡμῖν δὲ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα χαίροντες ὑπηρετοῦμεν καὶ εὐχόμενοι μετὰ τῆς βασιλικῆς δυνάμεως καὶ σωφρονᾶ τὸν λόγισμον ἔχοντας ἡμᾶς εὐρεθῆναι. Just. Martyr. Apol. 1. p. 26.

Oramus pro omnibus Imperatoribus,

vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum. — & quæcunque hominis & Cæsaris vota sunt. Apolog. § 30.

Deprecamur diebus ac noctibus & pro salute populi, & pro statu Imperatorum vestrorum. Vid. A&C. Passion. Cyprian. apud Cyprian. p. 16. Edit. Rigaltii.

dinal Bellarmine, that it was not the want of will, but of the power only to rebel, which made the primitive Christians so patient under the persecuting Emperors, and particularly under Julian, because the Church had not yet acquired strength enough, to controul the Princes of the earth [1].

Now it is agreed by all, that these Fathers, whose testimonies I have just been reciting, were the most eminent lights of the fourth century; all of them sainted by the Catholic Church; and highly revered at this day in all Churches, for their piety, probity and learning: yet from the specimens of them above given, it is evident, that they would not scruple, to propagate any fiction, how gross soever, which served to promote the interest either of Christianity in general, or of any particular rite or doctrine, which they were desirous to recommend. St. *Jerom* in effect confesses it; for after the mention of a silly story, concerning the Christians of *Jerusalem*, who used to shew, in the ruins of the Temple, *certain stones of reddish color*, which they pretended to have been stained by the blood of *Zacharias the Son of Barachias*, who was slain between the Temple and the Altar, he adds, *but I do not find fault with an error, which flows from an hatred of the Jews, and a pious zeal for the Christian faith* [2].

If

[2] See Chillingworth's Works, 7th Edit. p. 283. & Not. *.

[2] Non condemnamus errorem, qui de odio Judæorum & fidei pietate descendit. Oper. T. 4. p. 113.

N. B. The same *Jerom* speaking, in another place, of the different manner, which writers found themselves obliged to use, in their controversial and their dogmatical writings, intimates, that in controversy, whose end was victory rather than truth, it was allowable, to employ

every artifice, which would best serve to conquer an adversary: in proof of which, "*Origen*, says he, *Methodius*, *Eusebius*, "*Apollinaris*, have written many thousands of lines, against *Celsus* and *Porphyry*: consider with what arguments "*and what slippery problems, they baffle* "*what was contrived against them by the* "*Spirit of the Devil: and because they* "*are sometimes forced to speak; they* "*speak not what they think, but what is* "*necessary against those, who are called* "*Gentiles.*

If the miracles then of the fourth century, so solemnly attested by the most celebrated and revered Fathers of the Church, are to be rejected after all as fabulous, it must needs give a fatal blow to the credit of all the miracles even of the preceding centuries; since there is not a single Father, whom I have mentioned in this fourth age, who for zeal and piety, may not be compared with the best of the more ancient, and for knowledge and learning, be preferred to them all. For instance, there was not a person in all the primitive Church, more highly respected in his own days, than St. *Epiphanius*, for the purity of his life, as well as the extent of his learning. He was a Master of *five languages*, and has left behind him one of the most usefull works, which remain to us from antiquity. St. *Jerom*, who personally knew him, calls him, *the Father of all Bishops, and a shining Star among them; the pattern of antient sanctity; the man of God of blessed memory; to whom the people used to flock in crouds, offering their little children to his benediction; kissing his feet; and catching the hem of his garment* [1].

All the rest were men of the same character, who spent their lives and studies in propagating the faith, and in combating the vices and hæresies of their times. Yet none of them have scrupled, we see, to pledge their faith for the truth of facts, which no man of sense can believe, and which their warmest admirers are forced to give up as fabulous. If such persons then could willfully attempt to deceive; and if the sanctity of their characters cannot assure us of their fidelity; what better security can we have from those, who lived before them? or

“ Gentiles. I do not mention the latin writers, *Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius, Victorinus, Lactantius, Hilarius*, lest I be thought, not so much to be defending myself, as

“ accusing others, Op. T. 4. p. 236.

[1] Oper. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 312, 313. 417, 443, 727.

what cure for our Scepticism, with regard to any of the miracles above mentioned? was the first Assertor of them, *Justin Martyr*, more pious, cautious, learned, judicious, or less credulous than *Epiphanius*? or were those virtues more conspicuous in *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius*, and *Lactantius*, than in *Athanasius*, *Gregory*, *Chrysostom*, *Jerom*, *Austin*? No body, I dare say, will venture to affirm it. If these later Fathers then, biassed by a false zeal or interest, could be tempted to propagate a known lie; or with all their learning and knowledge, could be so weakly credulous, as to believe the absurd stories, which they themselves attest; there must always be reason to suspect, that the same prejudices would operate even more strongly in the earlier Fathers; prompted by the same zeal and the same interests, yet indued with less learning, less judgement, and more credulity.

But whatever light the fourth Century may give us, in discovering the real character of the earlier ages, it affords us at least a sure preface, of what we are to expect from the fifth, into which we are now entering. Dr. *Waterland* himself allows, on the authority of *Nazianzen*, *that the state of the Church towards the end of the fourth century was become very corrupt* [1]: for that reason, as we have elsewhere seen, he durst not venture to appeal, in the case of it's miracles, to any of the celebrated Fathers above mentioned, as being evidently infected with that corruption. The learned *Mosheim* also, a foreign Divine, and zealous advocate of Christianity, who, by his writings against the Free-thinkers, as Dr. *Chapman* tells us, *has deserved the esteem of all good and learned men*, intimates his fears, “ that those, who
“ search with any attention into the writings of the greatest

[1] Import. of the Doct. of the Trin. p. 424.

“ and most holy Doctors of the fourth century, will find them
 “ all without exception, disposed *to deceive and to lie*, whenever
 “ the interest of religion requires it [1].” Since the degeneracy
 therefore of this age has obliged the most devoted admirers of
 antiquity, not onely to suspect, but to reject it’s miracles as
 spurious, we cannot be at a loss, what judgement we ought
 to form on the miracles of the following age, which is allowed
 by all to have been still more corrupt.

The succeeding Fathers however go on still as before, to as-
 sert the same miraculous gifts, and even more of them to the
 fifth, than to any of the preceding ages. Whence a certain
 infidel writer has taken occasion to censure the credit of Ec-
 clestialtical History, as being *full of miracles, wrought by such*
madmen, as Symeon Stylites [2], a Monk of the fifth century ;
 who spent the greatest part of his life on the top of a pillar,
 from which he drew his surname ; and whose wonderfull acts
 are particularly related by *Theodoret*. Now whether this *Symeon*
 was a madman or not, the credit of Christianity is no way af-
 fected by it. The History of the Gospel, I hope may be true,
 though the History of the Church be fabulous. And if the ec-
 clestiaftic Historians have recorded many silly fictions, under the
 name of miracles, as they undoubtedly have, the blame must
 be charged to the writers, not to their religion. But the cen-
 sure came from an Infidel, and for that reason, was at all events
 to be confuted ; since to allow a grain of truth to one of that
 class, is to betray the cause of Christianity, and to strengthen
 the hands of it’s enemies.

This is the principle, which generally animates the zeal, and
 glares through the writings of the modern advocates of our re-

[1] See Dr. Chapm. Miscellan. Tracts,
 p. 191, 207.

[2] See Christianity as old as the Creat.
 c. 8. p. 89.

ligion : and which in reality, has done more hurt and discredit to it, than all the attacks of it's open adversaries : and it was the same principle without doubt, that gave birth to the defence of *Symeon Stylites*, which Dr. *Chapman*, in his remarks on the Author referred to, has thought fit to attempt in the following words ;

“ I know our Author too well, to take his judgement either
 “ of madnefs or fenfe. 'Tis more than probable, that it is
 “ madnefs with him, to believe any miracles at all, of any
 “ perfon, or at any time. So that we are not to wonder, if
 “ *Symeon* and his miracles have no fort of credit with him. For
 “ this reason I addrefs myself here, not to him, but to thofe, who
 “ diftinguifh between truth and impofture, between clear and
 “ indisputable evidence, and that which is dark and fufpicious.
 “ The great *Theodore*, whose character for fenfe, learning and piety,
 “ is abundantly known and confefled, was himfelf contemporary
 “ with *Symeon Stylites*, was perfonally and intimately acquaint-
 “ ed with him, converfed with him for many years together,
 “ and declares himfelf an eye-witnefs to the wonderfull things
 “ related of him. He has given us an account of a great part
 “ of his Life, which he wrote, while *Symeon* was yet alive, and
 “ appeals to all the world for the truth of what he fays of him.
 “ He farther tells us, that *Symeon* by his miracles converted
 “ many thousands of Pagans, efpecially the *Ifhmaelites* or *Sara-*
 “ *cens*, to the Chriftian religion ; that he himfelf, at *Symeon's*
 “ defire, gave many of them the Sacerdotal benediction, and
 “ was in manifeft danger of lofing his life, by the impatience
 “ and eagernefs of the Barbarians to receive it from him. If
 “ we may not admit fuch evidence as this in proof of a matter
 “ of fact, I am afraid, we muft fhake the evidence of all hu-
 “ man testimony, and believe nothing, but what we fee, and
 feel,

“ feel, and know ourselves. Nay farther, our Author cannot
 “ prove, that there ever existed such a man as *Symeon Stylites*,
 “ by better evidence, than that, which I have produced, to
 “ prove his miracles [1].”

Here we see what a sort of character and language is prepared for those, who dare to reject the miracles of *Symeon*. They must be men, who *know not how to distinguish between truth and imposture; between indisputable and suspicious evidence; who shake the credit of all human testimony, and believe nothing, but what they see themselves.* And all this assurance is grounded on the single testimony of *Theodoret*, to whom, in order to enhance his authority, he has added, according to his usual way, the title of *the Great*. But as the Doctor has carried his defence of Monks and their miracles much farther, than any other Protestant, I believe, would venture to do, so it was natural to suspect, that he had been drawn into it by some Popish writer, of whom he had conceived a favorable opinion; and we find accordingly, that he has borrowed, not onely his notions, but his very expressions from *Monf. Tillemont*, who talks in the same pompous strain, of *Le Grand Theodoret*, *whose evidence cannot be slighted, he says, without shaking the credit of all human testimony* [2].

But let him borrow them from whomsoever he pleases; my business is, to inquire onely whether, what he has borrowed and so peremptorily affirmed, be true, or credible, or fit for a Protestant Divine, to impose upon the consciences of Christians. This therefore is the point, which I shall now procede to consider, from the authority of those very testimonies, to which he himself has referred us.

We are told then by *Theodoret*, “ that this *Symeon* spent the
 “ first part of his life in certain Monasteries near *Antioch* in *Syria*,

[1] See Miscell. Tracts, p. 165.

[2] See Tillem. Mem. Vol. XV. p. 34⁸.

“ mortify-

“ mortifying his body by horrible austerities, not onely beyond
 “ the rules of their ordinary discipline, but above the force even
 “ of nature itself; till for his perseverance in these extravagant-
 “ cies, contrary to the Admonitions of his rulers, he was turn-
 “ ed out of the society, as giving an example, that might be
 “ dangerous or fatal to those, who attempted to imitate it.
 “ Upon this he retired to a separate Cave or Hut, where he
 “ took a fancy, after the example of *Moses* and *Elias*, to keep
 “ a fast and total abstinence from food, for forty intire days.
 “ But when another holy man called *Bassus*, represented to
 “ him the danger and even sin of an attempt, which would pro-
 “ bably destroy him, he complied so far, as to suffer ten loaves,
 “ and a pitcher of water to be immured with him in his cell,
 “ with a promise to make use of them, if he happened to want
 “ any refreshment. *Bassus* then closed up his door with mud,
 “ and left him for forty days; at the end of which, he returned,
 “ and clearing away the mud from the door, found the ten
 “ loaves intire, and the pitcher also full, but *Symeon* stretched
 “ upon the ground, quite spiritless and unable to speak or stir,
 “ till by the care of his friend, and the application of the sym-
 “ bols of the holy mysteries, he was gradually restored to his
 “ strength and former health. From which time, as *Theodoret*
 “ adds, he had then persevered twenty eight years, in the same
 “ practice of fasting forty days in each year. During the
 “ first part of which days, he used constantly to stand: and
 “ when through want of nourishment he grew too weak to
 “ endure that posture, he then began to sit; but at the last,
 “ was forced to lie down half dead and almost spent [1].

His next whim was, “ to fix his perpetual station on the top of
 “ a pillar, whose circumference was hardly of two cubits; and

[1] Vid. *Theodoret. Religios. Histor. p. 880. Oper. T. 3. Edit. Paris.*

“ after

“ after he had spent many years in that position, like a statue
 “ upon it’s pedestal, on several different pillars, he mounted
 one at last, thirty six cubits high, and lived thirty years up-
 “ on it: being placed in the middle region, as it were, be-
 “ tween heaven and earth; where he conversed with God,
 “ and glorified him with Angels; offering up for the men on
 “ earth his supplications to God, and drawing down from
 “ heaven the blessings of God upon men [1].” But because
 these pillars allowed no other posture but that of standing, he
 contrived a method, which enabled him to endure still the fa-
 tigue of his usual fasts. “ For he got a beam fixed to the top of
 “ his pillar, to which he tied himself, and by that support held
 “ out the whole forty days without changing his position; till
 “ being strengthened by heaven with a larger measure of grace,
 “ he no longer wanted that help, but stood all the time,
 “ without tasting the least food, yet with ease and cheer-
 “ fulness [2].

The manner of passing his time on the pillar was this; “ all
 “ the nights and days also, till three in the afternoon, were
 “ spent by him in prayer, in which he used continual bow-
 “ ings of his body, and always touched his very toes with his
 “ head. For this, says *Theodoret*, was easy to him, because
 “ he made but one meal in the week, and that a very light
 “ one, so that his belly being generally empty, gave him no
 “ obstruction in bending his back. One of those who stood by,
 “ looking upon him with *Theodoret*, had the curiosity to count
 “ the number of his bowings, but when he had counted to
 “ twelve hundred and forty four, he was tired and would
 “ count them no longer [3]. On solemn Festivals, he stood

[1] Ibid. p. 882.

[3] Ibid. 887. A.

[2] Ibid. 880.

“ with his hands stretched out towards heaven, from the
 “ setting of the Sun, to it's rising, without a wink of sleep the
 “ whole night [1].

“ From three in the afternoon it was his practice, to preach
 “ and to give divine lectures; to answer all quæstions and
 “ petitions, which were offered to him; to cure diseases, and
 “ to compose differences; but at Sun-setting he began to con-
 “ verse again with God [2]. He wrought innumerable mira-
 “ cles; giving health to the sick, children to the barren; and
 “ dispensing sacred oil to those likewise who desired it [3].” To
 many of which miracles *Theodore*t declares himself to have been
 an eye-witness, as well as to his gift of prophecy, for he
 heard “ him foretell a famine and a pestilence, and an irrup-
 “ tion of locusts, and the death of one of *Theodore*t's enemies,
 “ fifteen days before it happened [4]. One of the miracles,
 “ which *Theodore*t saw, was this; an eminent *Ishmaelite* and
 “ believer in Christ, made a vow to God in the presence of
 “ *Symeon*, that he would abstain from all animal food during
 “ the rest of his life: but being tempted afterwards to break
 “ his vow, he resolved to eat a fowl, and ordered it to be
 “ dressed for him accordingly; but when he sat down to eat,
 “ he found the flesh of it turned into stone. The Barbarian,
 “ amazed at this miracle, ran away in all haste to the Saint,
 “ proclaiming his secret crime to all people, and imploring the
 “ Saint, by the omnipotence of his prayers, to release him
 “ from the bond of this sin. There were many eye-witnesses of
 “ this miracle, who handled the fowl, and found the part
 “ of it about the breast, to be compounded of bone and of
 “ stone [5].”

[1] Ibid. D.

[2] Ib. 188. B.

[3] Ib. 885, 886, &c.

[4] Ib. 885.

[5] Ib. B.

By these miracles and austerities, the fame of *Symeon*, as *Theodoret* says, was spread through the whole world: so that people of all nations and languages flocked to him in crouds from the remotest parts of the earth; from *Spain* and *Gaul*, and even *Britain* itself; and his name was so celebrated at *Rome*, that the *Artificers* of all kinds had little images of him, placed in the entrance of their shops, as a guard and security to them against all sorts of mischief [1].

This is the account in short of the Life of *Symeon Stylites*: the bare recital of which, tho' attested by ten *Theodorets*, must needs expose the absurdity of believing, that it could in any manner be suggested or directed by divine inspiration. Yet *Dr. Chapman* contends, that there is no better evidence for the very existence of *Symeon*, than we have for his miracles [2]. By which he means, I suppose, that we have the same evidence for both; the testimony of the same *Theodoret*, which he imagines to be as good in the one case, as in the other: not reflecting, that the same witness, of whatever character he be, will necessarily find a very different degree of credit, according to the different nature of the facts, which he attests; and tho' credible in some, may be justly contemptible in others. For example, when we are told by *Theodoret*, and after him by *Evagrius*, that a certain Monk called *Symeon*, who was personally known to them, took a fancy to live upon a pillar, where he was seen every day by many thousands; we have no reason to doubt of it; the thing was notorious, and there were many such Enthusiasts in the same age; and every one of those thousands, who saw him, were as good witnesses of it, as *Theodoret* himself. But when we are told by the same writers, that *Symeon* was inspired by God, and performed many

[1] 882. A.

[2] Miscell. Tracts, p. 167.

things about the force of human nature: this is a different case, which cannot command the same belief; being a matter of opinion, rather than of fact; of which very few could judge, fewer still be certain, and scarce one perhaps of all the thousands, who saw him, could be a competent witness: while the character of *Symeon* on the one side, and of *Theodoret* on the other, suggest many obvious reasons against the credibility of it.

To illustrate this more clearly by a similar instance from profane history. Two classical writers of undoubted credit, *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*, have each written the Life and acts of the Emperor *Vespasian*: who alone, they say, of all the Princes before him, was made a better man, by his advancement to the Empire [1]. But the same writers also declare, that this good Emperor, by a divine admonition from the God *Serapis*, publicly restored a blind man to his sight; and a cripple to his limbs, in the view of the people of Alexandria: and that many years after his death, when there was no reward or temptation for telling such a lie, several witnesses were still living, who had seen those miracles performed, and bore testimony to the truth of them [2]. Now it is certain, that no body in any age, ever doubted of the existence of *Vespasian*, yet many probably in all, and every single man in the present, not only doubt, but reject the story of his miracles: tho' these last be affirmed by the same writers, who assure us of the first: to whose authority still we pay all the regard, that is due, by believing them in every thing, that is credi-

[1] Solusque omnium ante se Principum, in melius mutatus est. Tacit. Hist. l. 1. c. 50.

[2] E plebe quidam luminibus orbatu, item alius debili crure, sedentem pro tribunali pariter adierunt, orantes opem va-

letudinis, demonstratam a *Serapide* per quietem. &c. Sueton. in Vit. c. 7.

Utrumque qui interfuere, nunc quoque memorant, postquam nullum mendaciorum pretium. Tacit. Hist. l. 4. c. 81.

ble; in every thing, of which they were competent witnesses; and charging the absurd and fabulous part, to the superstitions, prejudices, and false principles, which prevailed in those ages.

The case is the same with *Theodoret* and all the Ecclesiastical Historians, who have transmitted to us the Lives and miracles of the Monks, and other pious men of their own times. We take their word, as far as reason and religion will permit us; and ascribe the rest to the credulity, the prejudices, and erroneous principles, which infected all the writers of those days. The Romanists indeed roundly embrace and espouse all the absurd and fictitious stories, which they have delivered to us; and are under a necessity of doing so, since they teach the same corrupt doctrines, retain the same superstitious rites, and exercise the same usurped powers, for the sake of which, those very stories were originally forged. But no Protestants, as far as I have observed, except the two Doctors above mentioned, have ever attempted to defend either the miracles, or the principles of the fifth century; but on the contrary, have constantly signified either their suspicion, or utter contempt of them.

Mr. *Dodwell*, whose piety and zeal for the honor of Christianity were as conspicuous as his learning, declares, "that
" nothing does so much discredit to the cause of miracles in
" general, among the Infidels and Atheists, as the impostures
" of the later ages; meaning the fourth, fifth, and following
" centuries. These, says he, they oppose to the undoubted
" credit of the earlier ages; and because these false prodigies
" deceived the whole world, they infer, that the ancient ones
" likewise, tho' false, might impose in the same manner upon
" the credulity of mankind [1]."

[1] Atqui nihil est quod miraculorum quam recentiorum Fabulatorum repellio-
causæ universæ apud Atheos magis noceat, *μολα*. &c. *Dodw. Dissert. Iren. 2. § 69.*

Dr. *Cave*, the large extent of whose faith shines through every page of his writings, yet plainly intimates his suspicion, of what *Theodoret* has attested concerning this very *Symeon*: for speaking of the amazing austerities, which he practised, he adds, *moreover, if the Greek writers are to be regarded, he wrought innumerable miracles* [1].

Mr. *Collier* also, whose Ecclesiastical History shews, that miracles even of the grossest kind were of no hard digestion with him, could not yet digest these of our *Symeon*, but declares them to be wholly *fabulous, and such, as render the truth itself suspected* [2].

Dr. *Hody*, so highly esteemed for his critical and theological learning, observes, “ that stories concerning miracles are
“ common to all the writers of Lives, among the Christians
“ of the middle ages, tho’ otherwise good authors: and that
“ the professed Historians themselves, as *Theodoret* and *Eva-*
“ *grius*, are full of relations; which were the result of a
“ superstitious piety [3].

Since the most learned then, as well as orthodox of our Divines, and the most conversant also in Ecclesiastical antiquity, have so strongly signified their distrust, both of the testimony of *Theodoret*, and the particular acts of this *Symeon*, it is surprizing, that Dr. *Chapman* should think it of service to Christianity, to lay so great a stress upon them, and in so peremptory a manner, to vindicate the credit of miracles, whose sole tendency is to recommend, as a perfect pattern of the Christian life, the most extravagant enthusiasm and contemptible superstition, that any age or history perhaps has ever produced. For that this was really the case, is evident

[1] *Hist. Litterar. T. 1. p. 439.*

[2] See *Dictionary* in *Symeon*. Styl.

[3] The Case of Sees vacated by an unjust deprivation. c. x. p. 120.

from the writings of *Theodoret* himself, whose *Life of Simeon Stylites*, is a part onely of his *religious history*, as it is called; filled with the *Lives of thirty Monks*, of the same class and character; distinguished by their peculiar austerities; and vying with each other, who could invent the most whimsical methods and painful arts of mortifying their bodies.

One of these called *Baradatus*, contrived a sort of cage for his habitation, coarsly formed of lattice work, so wide and open, as to expose him to all the inclemencies of the weather, and so low at the same time, that it could not admit the full height of his body, but obliged him to *stand always in the posture of stooping* [1].

Another of them called *Thalaleus*, of a very bulky size, suspended himself in the air, in a cage of a different kind, contrived by himself, and made so low and so strait also, that it left him no more room, than to sit with *his head perpetually bent down between his knees*; in which posture, he had spent *ten years*, when *Theodoret* first saw him [2]. Yet all these ridiculous whims and extravagancies are considered by *Theodoret*, as *the suggestions of the holy Spirit* [3], and divine inventions, to baffle the artifices of the Devil; or so many *ladders*, as he tells us, *by which they mounted up to heaven* [4]; and which were all confirmed by miracles, as a proof of the divine approbation.

These were the wonder-workers, and these the miracles of the fifth century; the character of which Dr. *Chapman* sums up to this effect in the following articles.

1. That they were of a public nature, and performed in such a manner, as left no room for delusion.

[1] *Histor. Religios. c. xxvii.*

[2] *Ibid. c. xxviii.*

[3] Ἐγὼ δὲ τῆς θείας ἀνεν οἰκονομίας ταύτην πεισύνω γενέσθαι τὴν γάσιν. *ib. p.*

882. B.

[4] Καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας οὐτρόφιμοι τῆς εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνόδου πολλὰς καὶ διαφόρους ἐμνηχανήσαντο κλίμακας. *Ib. p. 889. A.*

2. That they were attended with beneficial effects, which could not possibly have gained credit, unless the strongest evidence of sense had proved them to be true.

3. That the end of them was not to confirm any idle errors or superstitious, but purely to advance the glory of truth and virtue.

4. That the accounts of them are given by men of unquestionable integrity, piety, and learning, who were eye-witnesses of many of the facts, and declare in the most solemn manner, that they knew them to be true.

5. That they were far from being vain and unnecessary, so as to render them doubtful to after ages—but were attested by the strongest moral evidence, equal to that, by which most of the antient miracles are supported.

6. That they are incapable of giving any countenance to the fabulous pretences of the Papists: and that a protestant of common capacity will discern as much difference between them and the Popish miracles, as between gold and brass, between light and darkness [1].

Yet from the short specimen of these miracles already given, and much more, from a full list of them, which, if it were required, may hereafter be given, the very contrary character of them, I am persuaded, will appear to be the true one, to all unprejudiced readers, in every one of those articles.

1. That they were all of such a nature, and performed in such a manner, as would necessarily inject a suspicion of fraud and delusion.

2. That the cures and beneficial effects of them, were either false, or imaginary, or accidental.

3. That they tend to confirm the idlest of all errors and superstitions.

[1] *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 175, &c.

4. That

4. That the integrity of the witnesses is either highly questionable, or their credulity at least so gross, as to render them unworthy of any credit.

5. That they were not onely vain and unnecessary, but generally speaking, so trifling also, as to excite nothing but contempt.

And lastly, that the belief and defence of them, are the onely means in the world, that can possibly support, or that does in fact give any sort of countenance, to the modern impostures in the Romish Church.

Then as to the Monks also, who are said to have wrought those miracles, the Doctor is not less zealous in defending and extolling all their extravagances. He declares, “ that they
“ were intended for the best and most excellent purposes [1].
“ That all the friends to Christianity must think, that in their
“ voluntary austerities, they shewed such prudence, virtue,
“ and greatness of mind, as deserve the highest encomiums of
“ posterity [2]. And that the antient Monasteries were very
“ different from the modern; quite remote from the corrup-
“ tions of Popery, and deserving the approbation of the strict-
“ est Protestants [3].” Yet for my own part, notwithstanding all his panegyric on those primitive Monks and monasteries, I shall not scruple to own, 1st, That I look upon the whole institution of monkery, from what age or what Saint soever it drew it’s origin, to be contrary not onely to the principles of the Gospel, but to the interests of all civil society, and the chief source of all the corruptions, which have ever since infested the Christian Church. 2dly, That by all, which I have ever read of the old, and have seen of the modern

[1] Ibid. p. 162.

[3] Ibid. p. 180. 281.

[2] Ibid. p. 165.

Monks, I take the preference to be clearly due to the last, as having a more regular discipline, more good learning, and less superstition among them than the first [1].

Before we take leave of this subject, I shall just add a word or two concerning the character of *Theodore* himself, to whose testimony Dr. *Chapman* pays so extraordinary a regard, and whose authority he declares to be decisive in the case before us. The learned Monk. *Du Pin*, in his account of him, extracted from his writings, says, “ that he was born at *Antioch* A. D. “ 386. that his birth was accompanied by miracles, both before “ and after it, which he himself relates in his religious history: that, *if we may believe him*, his mother was healed “ of an incurable disease in her eye, by one *Peter* a Monk: “ that upon the prayers of another Monk, called *Macedonius*, “ God granted her to conceive a son, after thirteen years of

[1] Sir *Is. Newton* has shewn, that the Monks are the spawn and genuine offspring of those Hereticks, who in the second and third centuries, affected an extraordinary strictness of life: forbidding to marry and to eat the flesh of animals; and practising many absurd austerities of fastings, and watchings, which they in-joined as necessary to all Christians: whose doctrines and practices were rejected and condemned by all the Churches of those ages. But certain Enthusiasts, near the beginning of the fourth century, possessed with the same principles, yet with some little refinement and correction of them, retired into the deserts, where they spent their lives with an high reputation of sanctity, in exercises of devotion and divine contemplation; not imposing the same severities on all, as their predecessors, the Heretics had done, but on those onely, who voluntarily preferred the same mona-

stic life. These therefore began to be highly revered, and before the end of the fourth century, increased so fast, that they overflowed both the Greek and the Latin Church like a torrent: especially when *Constantin* the Great professed to esteem and honor them above all Christians; being persuaded, as *Eusebius* tells us, *that God did surely dwell in those souls, who had devoted themselves intirely to his service.* In *Aegypt* therefore, where this enthusiasm principally reigned, a third part of the people are said to have betaken themselves to the deserts: whence they soon spread themselves through the Christian world; and were the ringleaders in establishing the worship of Saints, and reliques, and all those other Superstitions, with which the fourth and all succeeding centuries ever after abounded. Observat. on the Proph. of Dan. par. 1. c. xiii.

“ barrenness, and to bring him safely into the world: that by
 “ the prayers of the first of those Monks, *Peter*, she was pre-
 “ served also from death after her delivery: and that her hus-
 “ band and her son had often felt the effects of *Peter’s* virtue
 “ and sanctity, and were cured of their distempers by touching
 “ onely his girdle [1].”

This account, I say, is drawn from *Theodoret* himself: whence we learn, that he was nursed and trained in all the bigotry and superstition, with which that age abounded: taught from his very cradle, to venerate Monks and their miracles: and made to believe, with the first knowledge which he received, that he owed his very existence to the efficacy of their prayers. He tells us, “ that his mother sent him once
 “ every week to beg the blessing of the Monk, *Peter*; and
 “ that he went as often also, to receive the instructions and
 “ benediction of the other Monk, *Macedonius*; who never fail-
 “ ed to remind him, of the great pains, which it had cost,
 “ to bring him into the world, and how many nights he
 “ had spent in praying to God for nothing else, but his
 “ birth [2].” And as *Theodoret* is said to have been very tenacious of the principles, which he had once imbibed [3], so it was his constant practice through his whole life, to visit the cells and habitations of all the celebrated Monks of those times; with whose lives and miracles he has filled his *religious history*; from which I shall here transcribe a story or two, out of the great number, which he has recorded, of the same sort, and

[1] See Du Pin’s account of *Theodoret*, Vol. IV. p. 55.

[2] Vid. *Theodor*, Hist. Religios. c. 9. p. 821. E. it. c. 13. p. 840. D. 839. D.

[3] Animo erat excelso & elato; sen-

tentia, quam semel imbiberat, tenacissimus, injuriarum & contradictionum haud satis patiens &c. *Cave Hist. Litt. de Theodorit. T. 1. p. 406.*

of his own knowledge, as a specimen both of the judgement and the fidelity of the compiler.

In his life of the Monk *Peter*, he declares, “ that his very
 “ garments wrought wonders, like to those of St. *Paul*: which
 “ I do not mention, says he, by way of hyperbole, but with
 “ the testimony of truth for what I am saying. For his girdle
 “ made of coarse linnen, being very broad and long, he cut it
 “ into two parts, with the one of which he girded his own
 “ loins, and mine, with the other. This last my mother has
 “ often applied to me and to my Father, when we were sick,
 “ and driven away our distempers by it ; and made use of it
 “ also herself, as a remedy for her own health. Many of our
 “ acquaintance, who knew this, frequently borrowed the gir-
 “ dle, for the service of other sick people, and always found
 “ the same good effects of it’s virtue: till a certain person, who
 “ borrowed it, ungratefull to his benefactors, never restored
 “ it, and so we were deprived of the benefit of this gift [1].”

In the life of another Monk, called *James*, he tells this story,
 “ that the reliques of some of the antient *Patriarchs*, *Prophets*,
 “ and *Apostles* were brought to him in a chest from *Pbœnicia*
 “ and *Palæstine*, and received by a public procession of all the
 “ orders of the Clergy and the Layety. But the Monk *James*
 “ did not think fit to assist at this solemnity, having conceived
 “ some doubts, it seems, whether the reliques, said to be
 “ *John Baptist’s*, were really so or not. Upon which, in the
 “ night following, as he was praying, there appeared to him
 “ a certain person cloathed in white, and demanded of him,
 “ *why he did not come out to meet them?* and when *James* asked,
 “ who they were, of whom he spake ; he replied, those, who

[1] Hist. Relig. c. ix. p. 826. B.

“ came the other day from *Phœnicia* and *Palæstine*. The next
 “ night also the same person appeared to him again ; and in or-
 “ der to remove all his scruples, brought along with him St.
 “ *John Baptist*, and the *Patriarch Joseph*, who were severally
 “ presented to him, and held discourse with him on the subject
 “ of their reliques [1].” With these stories, I shall leave it
 to the reader to determine, whether a writer of this turn and
 character can reasonably be thought unprejudiced, and of an
 authority uncontestable, or worthy indeed of any credit at all,
 where the honor of Monks, and the reality of their miracles are
 the points in question.

The same *Monf. Du Pin*, after he has given us an abstract
 of *Theodoret's religious History*, adds the following reflection :
 “ this History contains many things remarkable, concern-
 “ ing the discipline of this time. By it we see, that great
 “ honor was given to the Saints ; that they were invoked ;
 “ that men expected to be helped by their prayers ; that their
 “ reliques were sought after with great earnestness ; that people
 “ believed very easily in them ; attributed great virtue and ma-
 “ ny miracles to them ; and were very credulous &c. [2].”
 But tho' the whole turn and purpose of *Theodoret's sacred History*,
 tends to strengthen the interest of the Romish, and to hurt the
 credit of the Protestant cause ; by celebrating the forged mira-
 cles of *Monks, and Saints, and reliques, and holy water, and sacred*
oil, it is curious to observe, with what a different temper, the
 Popish writer *Monf. Du Pin*, and the Protestant writer. *Dr.*
Chapman, have each expressed themselves on the subject of his
 testimony. The Papist, candidly intimating his doubts, says ;
if we may believe Theodoret, such and such miracles were per-
 formed. The Protestant on the contrary, condemning all doubts,

[1] Ibid. c. xxi. p. 862. D.

[2] See *Du Pin*. ibid. p. 65.

declares, *that we must believe him, that his evidence is uncontestable, that to reject it, is to destroy the faith of history* [1]. The fortunes of these two writers were as different also, as their principles: the candor of the Papist being thought too favorable to Protestantism, was censured and disgraced by the Popish Bishops; the zeal of the Protestant, tending directly to Popery, was extolled and rewarded by the Protestant Bishops.

We have dwelt already so long on the miracles of the fifth century, that it must be needless, to examine the particular merit of that miracle, which Dr. *Berriman* has so accurately defended. I shall employ therefore but a very few words upon it. The story is this: "*Huneric the Vandal*, a Christian Prince of the *Arian* heresy, in his persecution of the orthodox party in *Africa*, ordered the tongues of a certain society of them to be cut out to the roots: but by a surprizing instance of God's good Providence, they were enabled to speak articulately and distinctly without their tongues; and so continuing to make open profession of the same doctrine, they became not onely the preachers, but living witnesses of its truth; and a perpetual rebuke to the *Arian* faction [2]." This miracle is attested by several contemporary writers, who affirm, that they had seen and heard some of those Confessors *speaking distinctly, after they had lost their tongues*.

Now it may not improbably be supposed on this occasion, that tho' their tongues were ordered to be cut to the roots, and are said to have been so cut, yet the sentence might not be so strict-

[1] *If we may not admit such evidence as this in proof of a matter of fact, I am afraid, we must shake the evidence of all human testimony, and believe nothing but what we see, feel, and know ourselves.* Miscel.

Tracts, p. 167. it p. 174, &c.

[2] See Berrim. *Historic. account of the Trinitar. Controv.* p. 327, &c. and Dr. Chapm. *Misc. Tracts*, p. 174.

ly executed, as not to leave in some of them, such a share of that organ, as was sufficient, in a tolerable degree, for the use of speech. It is remarkable also, that two of this company are said to have utterly lost the faculty of speaking; who had been deprived perhaps of their intire tongues: for tho' this be ascribed, to the peculiar judgement of God, for a punishment of the immoralities, of which they were afterwards guilty, yet that seems to be a forced and improbable solution of the matter. We are told likewise, that another of these Confessors, *who had been dumb from his birth, yet by losing his tongue with the rest, acquired also the use of speech*: which is a circumstance so singular and extraordinary, that it carries with it a suspicion of art and contrivance, to enhance the luster of the miracle.

But to come still more close to the point. If we should allow after all, that the tongues of these Confessors were cut away to the very roots; what will the learned Doctor say, if this boasted miracle, which he so strenuously defends, should be found at last to be no miracle at all? The tongue indeed has generally been considered, as absolutely necessary to the use of speech: so that to hear men talk without it, might easily pass for a miracle, in that credulous age; especially, when it gave so illustrious a confirmation to the orthodox faith, and so signal an overthrow to the *Arian Heresy*. Yet the opportunities of examining the truth of the case by experiment, have been so rare in the world, that there was always room to doubt, whether there was any thing miraculous in it or not. But we have an instance in the present century, indisputably attested, and published about thirty years ago, which clears up all our doubts, and intirely decides the quæstion. I mean the case of *a Girl, born without a tongue, who yet talked as distinctly and easily, as if she had enjoyed the full benefit of that organ*: a particular ac-

count of which is given, in *the memoirs of the Academy of Sciences at Paris*, drawn up by an eminent Physician, who had carefully examined the mouth of the Girl, and all the several parts of it, in order to discover, by what means her speech was performed without the help of a tongue: which he has there explained with great skill and accuracy. In the same account he refers us likewise to another instance, published about eighty years before, by a Surgeon of Saumur, of a Boy, who at the age of eight or nine years, lost his tongue, by a gangrene or ulcer, occasioned by the small pox, yet retained the faculty of speaking, in the same manner as the Girl [1].

Let our Doctor then defend this miracle with all the power of his zeal and learning: let him urge the testimonies of Senators, Chancellors, Bishops, Archbishops and Popes; of persons, who had too much learning and judgement, he says, to be deceived in so important a fact, tho' they lived an hundred years after it; of Æneas also of Gaza, who opened their very mouths, as he tells us, to make his observations with more exactness [2]. Yet the humble testimony of this single Physician, grounded on real experiment, will overturn at once all his pompous list of dignified authorities, and convince every man of judgement, that this pretended miracle, like all the other fictions, which have been imposed upon the world, under that Character, owed it's whole credit to our ignorance of the powers of nature.

In short; when we reflect on the corrupt and degenerate state of the Church, in the end of the fourth century, allowed by the most diligent inquirers into Antiquity; and that this age was the pattern to all that succeeded it; in which the same corruptions were not onely practised, but agreeably to the na-

[1] *Memoires de L'Acad. des Scienc.*
Ann. 1718. p. 6.

[2] See Berrim. *ibid.*

ture of all corruption, carried still to a greater excess, and improved from bad to worse, down to the time of the Reformation; we may safely conclude, without weighing the particular scruples, which may arise upon each single miracle, that they were all, in the gross, of the same class and species, the mere effects of fraud and imposture. For we can hardly dip into any part of Ecclesiastical History, of what age soever, without being shocked by the attestation of several, which from the mere incredibility of them, appear at first sight to be fabulous. This is confessed on all sides, even by the warmest defenders of the Primitive Fathers, and cannot be accounted for in any other way, than by ascribing it, to the experience, which those Fathers had, of the blind credulity and superstition of the ages, in which they lived, and which had been trained by them, to consider *the impossibility of a thing, as an argument for the belief of it* [1]. But in whatever light we contemplate these stories; whether as believed, or as forged by them, or as affirmed only, and not believed; it necessarily destroys their credit in all other miraculous relations whatsoever. Yet it is surprizing to see, with what ease, the Advocates of these miracles overlook and condemn all reflections of this kind, and think it sufficient to tell us, that *the Fathers, tho' honest, were apt to be very credulous*: for with these disputants, credulity, it seems, how gross soever, casts not the least slur upon their testimony; which, in all cases, where it does not confute itself by it's own extravagance, they maintain to be convincing and decisive, and supe-

[1] *Tertullian*, disputing against certain Heretics, who denied the reality of Christ's human nature; reasons thus. "The Son of God was crucified: it is no shame to own it, because it is a thing to be a-

"shamed of. The Son of God died:
"it is wholly credible, because it is ab-
"surd. When buried, he rose again to
"life: it is certain, because it is im-
"possible. *De Carne Christi.* § 5.

rior to all suspicion. Whereas the sole inference, which reason would teach us to draw from an attestation of miracles, so conspicuously fabulous, is; that the same witnesses are not to be trusted in any; as being either incapable, from a weakness of judgement of discerning the truth and probability of things; or determined by craft and fraud, to defend every thing that was usefull to them. In a word; in all inquiries of this nature, we may take it for a certain rule; that those, who are conscious of the power of working true miracles, can never be tempted either to invent, or to propagate any, which are false; because the detection of any one, would taint the credit of all the rest, and defeat the end proposed by them. But Impostors are naturally drawn, by a long course of success, into a security, which puts them off their guard, and tempts them gradually, out of mere wantonness, and contempt of those, whom they had so frequently deluded, to stretch their frauds beyond the bounds of probability, till by repeated acts of this kind, they tire the patience of the most credulous, and expose their tricks to the scorn even of the populace.

I have now thrown together all, which I had collected for the support of my argument, or as much at least, as I thought sufficient to illustrate the real state of the primitive miracles: and if we cast up the sum of all that boasted evidence, which the *unanimity of the Fathers, the tradition of the Catholic Church, and the faith of history* have produced at last on the other side, towards the confirmation of the said miracles, we shall find the whole, to amount in reality to no proof at all. For to run over them all again in short.

The gift of *raising the dead*, is affirmed onely by the single authority of *Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons*; and was either not known, or not believed at least, in the very same age, by another Bishop,

shop, full as venerable, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*. The *gift of tongues*, which rests likewise on the single testimony of the same *Irenæus*; is confuted even by himself, who complains of his own want of it, in the very work of propagating the Gospel. The *gift of expounding the Scriptures*, which is reckoned commonly with the rest, and claimed in particular by *Justin Martyr*, is allowed, to have had no subsistence at all, in any age, or any writer of the primitive Church. The *gift of casting out Devils*, the most celebrated of them all, is reduced to nothing, by the accounts even of the Antients themselves, which plainly testify, that it had no effect in many cases, and could not work a perfect cure in any. And as to other diseases, where oil especially was applied, they might probably enough be cured without a miracle; or by the same arts, with which the same cures were performed among the Heathens: which, tho' the undoubted effects of fraud, were yet managed so dexterously, as to be constantly ascribed by the Christians to the power of Dæmons. Lastly, the *gift of Prophetic visions and trances*, was of a kind, which could not easily be proved to the satisfaction of any; was of no service therefore to the propagation of the Gospel, or the conviction of unbelievers; being wholly exercised among the Christians themselves: and owing it's chief credit to Heretics and Enthusiasts; and always suspected by the sober and judicious: so that, after flourishing for a while through a visionary generation or two, it presently after fell into utter contempt.

This then being the real state of the miracles of the primitive Church, I freely commit them once more to the *Chapmans*, the *Berrimans*, and the *Stebbings*; to defend and enjoy them, as much as they please; happy without doubt, in this sceptical age, to find themselves blessed with that heroic faith, which

can remove mountains, and beat down every obstacle, which sense or reason, or fact can possibly oppose to it. Dr. Chapman has declared beforehand, *that whenever my larger work should appear, the primitive Fathers would find greater friends to their memory, and abler advocates to their cause, than I would wish to exist* [1]. That time is now come; and those abler Advocates expected: but let them appear when they will, I am so far from grudging their help to the Fathers, that I wish them the ablest, which Popery itself can afford: for Protestantism, I am sure, can supply none, whom they would chuse to retain in their cause; none, who can defend them, without contradicting their own profession, and disgracing their own character; or produce any thing, but what deserves to be laughed at, rather than answered. I must however except one, who acts indeed with a better grace and more consistency: for when I had treated him by mistake, as a *Protestant*, he flatly disowns the name, and calls himself a *Catholic-Christian* [2]; the same title, which a Popish writer had before assumed, in his remarks on my *Letter from Rome*; and what all these Advocates, who hang, as it were, between the two religions, affect to assume, that they may evade for a while the more invidious name of Papist.

V. All that remains, towards the final confirmation of my argument, is, to refute, as I promised, some of the most plausible objections, which have been made to it by my Antagonists; and which by humouring the prejudices and prepossessions of many pious Christians, seem the most likely, to make an impression to it's disadvantage.

§ 1. In the first place then; It is objected, that by the character, which I have given of the antient Fathers, *the authority*

[1] See *Jes. Cabal. farther opened*, p. 45. [2] See *Apologetic. Epist.* p. 27, 28.

of the books of the New Testament, which were transmitted to us through their hands, will be rendered precarious and uncertain.

To which I answer; that the objection is trifling and groundless, and that the authority of those books does not depend upon the faith of the Fathers, or of any particular set of men, but on the general credit and reception which they found, not onely in all the Churches, but with all the private Christians of those ages, who were able to purchase copies of them: among whom, tho' it might perhaps be the desire of a few to corrupt, yet it was the common interest of all, to preserve, and of none, to destroy them. And we find accordingly, that they were guarded by all with the strictest care, so as to be concealed from the knowledge and search of their heathen adversaries, who alone were desirous to extirpate them. After such a publication therefore, and wide dispersion of them from their very origin, it is hardly possible, that they should either be corrupted, or suppressed, or counterfeited by a few, of what character or abilities soever; or that, according to the natural course of things, they should not be handed down from age to age, in the same manner, with the works of all the other antient writers of *Greece* and *Rome*, which tho' transmitted through the hands of many profligate and faithless generations of men, yet have suffered no diminution of their credit on that account: for tho' in every age there were several perhaps, who, from crafty and selfish motives, might be disposed to deprave, or even to suppress some particular books, yet their malice could reach onely to a few copies, and would be restrained therefore from the attempt, or corrected at least after the attempt by the greater number of the same books, which were out of their reach, and remained still incorrupt. But besides all this, there were some circumstances peculiar to

the books of the New Testament which insured the preservation of them more effectually, than of any other antient books whatsoever; the divinity of their character; and the religious regard, which was paid to them by all the sects and parties of Christians; and above all, the mutual jealousies of those very parties, which were perpetually watching over each other, lest any of them should corrupt the sources of that pure doctrine, which they all professed to teach and to deduce from the same books. Let the craft therefore of the antient Fathers be as great, as we can suppose it to be: let it be capable of adding some of their own forgeries for a while to the Canon of Scripture; yet it was not in the power of any craft, to impose spurious pieces, in the room of those genuine ones, which were actually deposited in all Churches, and preserved with the utmost reverence, in the hands of so many private Christians.

But I may go a step farther, and venture to declare; that if we should allow the objection to be true, it cannot in any manner hurt my argument: for if it be natural and necessary, that the craft and credulity of witnesses should always detract from the credit of their testimony; who can help it? or on what is the consequence to be charged, but on that nature and constitution of things, from which it flows? or if the authority of any books be really weakened, by the character which I have given of the Fathers, will it follow from thence, that the character must necessarily be false, and that the Fathers were neither crafty nor credulous? that surely can never be pretended; because the craft and credulity which are charged upon them must be determined by another sort of evidence; not by consequences, but by facts; and if the charge be confirmed by these, it must be admitted as true, how far soever the consequences may reach.

§ 2. It has been alledged, “ that all suspicion of fraud in
 “ the case of the primitive miracles seems to be precluded, by
 “ that public appeal and challenge which the Christian Apo-
 “ logists make to their enemies the Heathens, to come and
 “ see with their own eyes the reality of the facts which they
 “ attest.” But this objection, tho’ it may seem plausible in-
 deed to a common reader, yet to all, who are acquainted with
 the condition of the Christians in those days, and the difficulty
 of making their Apologies known to the world, will be found
 to have no real weight in it. The Gospel indeed soon began
 to make a considerable progress among the vulgar, and to gain
 some few also of a more distinguished rank, yet continued to
 be held in such contempt by the generality of the better sort,
 through the three first centuries, that they scarce ever thought
 it worth while to make any enquiry about it, or to examine
 the merit of it’s pretensions. The principal writers of *Rome*,
 who make any mention of the Christians, about the Time of
Trajan, plainly shew that they knew nothing more of them,
 or their religion than what they had picked up, as it were, by
 chance, from the gross misrepresentation of common fame,
 and speak of them accordingly, as *a set of despicable, stubborn, and*
even wicked Enthusiasts.

Suetonius calls them, *a race of men of a new and mischievous*
superstition [1]. And *Tacitus*, describing the horrible tortures,
 which they suffered under *Nero*, for the pretended crime of
 burning the City of *Rome*, says; “ that they were detested for
 “ their flagitious practices; possessed with an abominable su-
 “ perstition; and condemned, not so much for their supposed
 “ crime of setting fire to the City, as for the hatred of all

[1] *Afflicti supplicii Christiani: genus hominum superstitionis novæ & maleficæ, in*
Ner. c. 16.

“ mankind: and tho’ they deserved the most exemplary punish-
 “ ments, yet it raised some pity towards them, to see them so
 “ miserably destroyed, not on the account of the public utility,
 “ but to satiate the cruelty of a single man [1].”

Pliny also, when he was the Governor of a Province, in which the Christians were very numerous, and under an actual persecution in the reign of *Trajan*, yet in his celebrated letter to that Emperor concerning them, declares; “ that he had never
 “ been present at any of their examinations, and did not so
 “ much as know, for what they were punished, or how far
 “ they deserved punishment: that by all the inquiries, which
 “ he had since made, he could not discover any practices
 “ among them, but what were harmless and innocent.—And
 “ nothing in short, but a wretched and extravagant supersti-
 “ tion, which had spread itself very wide, among persons of
 “ both sexes, of every age and condition; which might how-
 “ ever be subdued by gentler methods; by moderating the
 “ rigor of the persecution, and pardoning the penitent; by
 “ which lenity great numbers of them had already been recall-
 “ ed to their antient worship [2].”

This is the whole account, which we have of the Primitive Christians, from the best Heathen writers, to the time of *Antoninus Pius*: in whose reign, and that of his Successor, *M. Aurelius*, the antient Apologies, of *Justin Martyr*, *Melito* and

[1] Quos per flagitia invidios, vulgus Christianos appellabat—excrucians Superstitio rursus erumpebat—haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis, convicti—&c. Ann. l. 15. 44.

[2] Cognitionibus de Christianis inter-
 fui nunquam. ideo nescio, quid aut quate-
 nus aut puniri soleat, aut quæri—&c. Ep.
 l. x. 97.

N.B. *Pliny* says in this letter, that many

of both sexes, and of all ages, ranks or orders of men, had embraced Christianity. *Tertullian* also gives the same account about an hundred years later. [Apologet. 1. ad Scapul. vers. fin.] but it must be observed, that their accounts were given from the Provinces of *Bithynia* and *Africa*, where the dignity even of the most eminent was but very little considered or respected in the great Republic of *Rome*.

Athenagoras, were addressed to the Emperor and Senate of Rome: notwithstanding which, their condition, generally speaking, continued much the same, through the following ages, till they were established at last by the civil power: during all which time, they were constantly insulted and calumniated by their Heathen Adversaries, as a *stupid, credulous, impious sect; the scum of mankind, and the prey of crafty Impostors*: calumnies, of which all the antient Apologists complain, and take great pains to confute. *Tertullian* expostulates very warmly with the Heathen Magistrates, “that they would not give themselves
“ the trouble, to make the least inquiry into their manners
“ and doctrines; but condemned them for the mere name,
“ without examination or trial; treating a Christian of course,
“ as guilty of every crime; as an enemy of the Gods, Emperors,
“ laws, customs, and even of nature itself—and what, says he,
“ can be more unjust than to hate, what you know nothing
“ of, even tho’ it deserved to be hated [1]?” *Arnobius* and *Lactantius* make the same complaint near an hundred years later, in the beginning of the fourth century, that they were derided every where by the Gentiles, as a *senseless, stupid race of blockheads and brutes, to whose impieties, all the calamities, which afflicted the several countries, where they lived, were constantly imputed* [2].

[1] Christianum hominem, omnium Scelerum reum, Deorum, Imperatorum, legum, morum, naturæ totius inimicum existimas &c. *Apol.* 3. 1, 2.—‘ΕΦ’ ἡμῶν δὲ τὸ ὄνομα ὡς ἔλεγχον λαμβάνει. &c. *vid.* *Iust. Mart. Apol.* 1. p. 8.

[2] Nos hebetes, stolidi, obtusi promuntiamur & bruti sed pestilentias, iniquunt, & siccitates, bella, frugum inopiam—resque alias noxias—Dii nobis imputant injuriis vestris, atque offensionibus

exasperati—*Arnob.* 1. 1. p. 2, 7.

Cur igitur pro stultis, vanis inceptis habemur? *Lact.* 1. 4. c. 13. Illud quoque ortum est vulgare proverbium; *pluvia deficit, sit causa Christiani.* *Aug. Civ. D.* 1. 2. 3.

Si Tiberis ascendit ad mœnia; si Nilus non ascendit in arva; si cœlum stetit; terra movit; si fames; si lues; statim, Christianos ad Leonem, *Tertull. Apol.* 40.

In these circumstances, it cannot be imagined, that men of figure and fortunes would pay any attention to the Apologies or writings of a sect, so utterly despised; especially, when on the one hand, there was no elegance of style or composition, to invite them to read; and on the other, all the discouragements, which the Government could give, to deter them from reading. Much less can we believe, that the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, should take any notice of those Apologies, or even know indeed, that any such were addressed to them. For should the like case happen in our own days, that any Methodist, Moravian, or French Prophet, should publish an apology for his brethren, addressed to the King and the Parliament; is it not wholly improbable, that the Government would pay any regard to it, or take it at all into their consideration? How can it then be supposed, that the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, who had a worse opinion of the antient Christians, than we of our modern Fanatics, and instead of tolerating, were using all methods to destroy them, would give themselves the trouble to read, or to consider the merit of their writings?

We must add to all this, the great difficulty of publishing books, or of making them known to the world in those ages. The ease, which we now find in providing and dispersing, what number of copies we please, by the opportunity of the press, makes us apt to imagine, without considering the matter, that the publication of books was the same easy affair in all former times, as in the present. But the case was quite different. For when there were no books in the world, but what were written out by hand, with great labor and expence, the method of publishing them was necessarily very slow and the price very dear; so that the rich only and curious would be disposed or able to purchase them; and to such also, it was often

often difficult to procure them, or to know even where they were to be bought.

In the Epistle of the Church of *Smyrna*, mentioned above, concerning the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, there is a passage or two, which will help to confirm what I am now asserting. For towards the end of it, the *Philadelphians*, to whom it is addressed, are desired, as soon as they have informed themselves, of the contents, *to send it forward to all the other brethren*, who lived more remote, or beyond *Philadelphia*, that they also might read it and glorify God. The note likewise, which is annexed to the end of the Epistle, declares, “ that the copy of this
“ most valued piece, which had been transcribed from the book
“ of *Irenæus*, had lain buried and unknown at *Corinth* for several ages, almost destroyed by time, and in danger of being
“ lost to the world, till it was discovered by a revelation from
“ *Polycarp* himself, made to one *Pionius*,” from whose transcript, all the copies of it now extant are derived [1]. These passages, I say, plainly intimate, how difficult it must have been to the Christians of those days to provide such books as were wanted even for their own use, and much more to disseminate such a number of them, as was sufficient for the information of the public.

Since this then was the condition of publishing books in those primitive ages, in which the Christians were neither able to bear the expence of copying, nor the Heathens disposed to buy them, there is great reason to believe, that their Apologies, how gravely soever addressed to Emperors and Senates, lay concealed and unknown to the public for many years, in a few private hands, and among the faithful onely; especially,

[1] Μαθητὲς ἐν ταῦτα, καὶ τοῖς ἐπί- ἵνα καὶ ἐκεῖνοι δοξάζωσι τὸν κύριον. § xx.
κτεῖνα ἀδελφοὶς τὴν ἐπιστολὴν διαπέμψατε, it. xxiii, xxiv.

when the publication of them was not onely difficult and expensive, but so criminal also, as to expose them often to danger, and even to capital punishment; and when the books themselves, as oft as they were found by the magistrate, instead of being read, were generally ordered to be burnt [1].

§. 3. It is urged against me, “ that no suspicion of craft can “ reasonably be entertained against persons of so exalted a piety, “ who exposed themselves to persecution and even to Martyr- “ dom, in confirmation of the truth of what they taught.” But this likewise will appear to have as little solidity in it as the former. For all, who are conversant with history, know; that nothing gives so invincible a prejudice, and so strong a bias to the mind of man, as religious zeal in favour of every thing, that is thought useful to the object, which excites it. And the several facts, which I have already stated, will inable us to judge, in what manner the extraordinary zeal of those antients may be presumed to have operated in the case now in quæstion. I shall say nothing more therefore on that head: but since some of those Fathers, to whose testimony I have chiefly appealed, as *Papias*, *Iustin*, *Irenæus*, *Cyprian*, &c. were not onely persons of the greatest piety and zeal, but said to have been Martyrs also for the faith of Christ; it may be proper to add a reflection or two on the particular case of Martyrdom; in order to shew, that this venerable name made no real difference in the personal characters of men, nor ought to give any additional weight to the authority of a Christian witness.

[1] Καίπερ θανάτω ἱερεινίῳ καὶ τῶν διδασκόντων, ἢ ὅλως ὁμολογούντων τὸ ὄνομα τῶ Κριστοῦ, ἡμεῖς πανταχῶς καὶ ἀσπαζόμεθα, καὶ οἰδαύσκομεν. εἰ δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς ὡς ἱχθεοὶ ἐνιεύχεσθε τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις, καὶ

πλείονι δύνασθε—τῷ φοβεύειν Just. M. Apol. 1. p. 69.

Nam nostra quidem scripta cur ignibus meruerunt dari? cur immaniter conventicula dirui? Arnol. 1. 4. vers. fin.

There were various motives of different kinds, as Mr. *Dodwell* has shewn, which would naturally induce the primitive Christians, not onely to indure, but even to wish and aspire
 “ to Martyrdom. He observes, that among the antient *Jews*,
 “ the *Galileans* were remarkable for the obstinacy of their temper, and a contempt of death: whose example, he imagines,
 “ might have some influence on those first Christians, who
 “ drew their origin from that country, and were constantly
 “ called *Galilæans*, and charged with the same spirit of obstinacy by their adversaries [1].” A character, which seems to be particularly verified in the Christians of *Palæstine*, concerning whom, *Tiberianus*, the Governor of *Syria*, sends the following account to the Emperor *Trajan*.

“ I am quite tired with punishing and destroying the *Galilæans*, or those of the sect called Christians, according to
 “ your orders. Yet they never cease to profess voluntarily,
 “ what they are, and to offer themselves to death. Wherefore
 “ I have labored by exhortations and threats, to discourage
 “ them from daring to confess to me, that they are of that
 “ Sect. Yet in spite of all persecution, they continue still to
 “ do it. Be pleased therefore to let me know, what your
 “ Highness thinks proper to be done with them [2].”

Glory also, or reputation was another great spur to Martyrdom: for by the principles of those ages, nothing was esteemed more glorious than the *crown of Martyrdom*, as it was called. There was an anniversary festival instituted to the honor of each Martyr; in which their memories were celebrated by panegyrical orations, and a veneration next to divine, paid to their

[1] *Poterat & Judæorum, præsertim* Dodw. Dissert. Cyprian. 12. 2.

Galilæorum obstinata illa indoles in primorum Christianorum patientia locum habere.

[2] Vid. *Tiberian. Epist. apud Cotel. Edit. Patr. Apostol. V. 2. p. 181.*

reliques. In their prisons they were visited by the Christians of all ranks; proud to minister to them in the very lowest offices, and to kiss their chains: and if they happened to escape with life from their tortures, as they frequently did, their authority was ever after most highly respected; in the decision of all controversies; in absolving men from the ordinary discipline of the Church; in granting pardon to lapsed Christians; and restoring them to communion, on what terms they thought fit [1].

But the principal incentive to Martyrdom, was the assurance, not onely of an immortality of glory, and happiness in another world, in common with all other pious Christians, but of extraordinary and distinguished rewards, and a degree of happiness, proportionable to the degree of their sufferings. For while the souls of ordinary Christians were to wait their doom in some intermediate state; or pass to their final bliss through

[2] Quis in carcerem ad osculanda vincula Martyris reptare patietur? [Tertull. ad Uxor. 2. 4.] Quam pacem quidam in Ecclesia non habentes, a Martyribus in carcere exorare solebant. [Id. ad Martyr. 2.] [Vid. Dodw. Dissert. Cyprian. xi. 9, 10.]

Sacrificia pro eis semper, ut meministis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum passiones & dies anniversaria commemoratione celebramus. [Cypr. Ep. 34. it. 37.]

Mandant aliquid Martyres fieri? si iusta, & licita, si non contra ipsum Dominum, a Dei Sacerdote facienda sunt. [Cypr. de Lapsis. p. 174.] Ut qui libellum a Martyribus acceperunt, & auxilio eorum adjuvari apud Dominum in delictis suis possunt—cum pace a Martyribus promissa ad Dominum remittantur. [Id. Ep. 13. & 12.]

N. B. Eusebius speaking of the persecu-

tion under *M. Aurelius* and *L. Verus*, says, “that those, who were then racked and “tortured for the confession of their faith, “were so humble, that they would not “assume the title of Martyrs, nor suffer “it to be given to them, declaring none “to be worthy of that name, but those “who were made perfect by suffering “death; and praying, that they also “might arrive at that perfection.” [Hist. Eccles. 5. 2.] But we find a contrary practice in *Cyprian's* time, who freely gives the title of *Martyr* to all, who had endured torments for the faith of Christ. Which was so far from being rejected by them, that many, as he complains, were so puffed up with pride on that account, as to give great disturbance to the peace and discipline of the Church. Vid. Epist. x, xi, xii, &c.

a purgation by fire; it was a general belief, that the Martyrs were admitted *to the immediate fruition of Paradise, and that the fire of Martyrdom purged all their sins away at once* [1]. And the opinion likewise, which commonly prevailed in those days, that this world was near to it's end, made them the more eager still to snatch that crown, which would entitle them to such high privileges; give them a power with God, so as to procure benefits for others, and make them Assessors and Judges with Christ himself at the last day [2].

There was another notion, diligently inculcated and generally believed at the same time, which was sufficient of itself to efface all the terrors of Martyrdom, *viz.* that under all that dreadful apparatus of racks and fires, and the seeming atrocity of their tortures, the Martyrs were miraculously freed from all sense of pain, nay felt nothing but transports of joy, from the cruelty of their tormentors. All which is expressly affirmed by many of the ecclesiastical writers. *The visible assistance of heaven*, says Dr. Chapman, *relieving the pains of some, extinguishing*

[1] Sed & justos cum judicaverit, etiam igni eos examinabit, &c. Laët. vii. 21.

Nemo peregrinatus a corpore, statim immoratur penes Dominum, nisi ex Martyrii prærogativa; paradiso scilicet, non inferis diversurus. Tertull. de Resurr. carn. 43.

Quis non—pati exoptat? ut Dei totam gratiam redimat; ut omnem veniam ab eo compensatione sanguinis sui expediat? omnia enim huic operi delicta donantur. Id. Apologet. ad fin.

N. B. Cyprian, speaking of the different state of the lapsed Christians, tho' restored afterwards to the Church by penance, and of the Martyrs, who had nobly suffered death or torments for the faith of Christ, says; it is one thing, to lie at

mercy; another, to arrive at glory; one thing, to be thrown into prison, and not to be discharged, till you have paid the uttermost farthing; another, to receive the immediate reward of your faith and virtue: one thing, to be cleansed from your sins by a long course of torments, and a purgation by fire; another, to have all your sins wiped off at once by martyrdom: in a word, one thing, to hang in suspense about your doom, in the day of judgement; another, to be crowned directly by the Lord. Ep. 51. p. 71. ad fin.

[2] Αὐτοὶ τοίνυν οἱ θεοὶ Μάρτυρες παρ' ἡμῶν, οἱ νῦν τῷ Χριστῷ παρέδδοται, καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτῶν κοινωνοὶ, καὶ μετοχοὶ τῆς κρίσεως αὐτῶν. Euseb. Hist. l. 6. c. 42.

them in others, and converting them into pleasure and rapture in many—which facts, he declares, to be so well known and so well attested; so plain and so indisputable, that there was no occasion for him to take the trouble of proving them [1]. Socrates, the Historian, has furnished an instance of them in the case of one *Theodorus*: and the old Martyrologies, as they are published by the Romanists, and especially the *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*, to which the Doctor refers us for the indisputable proof of true miracles, will supply us with many more [2]. This *Theodorus* was a young Christian,

[1] Miscellan. Tracts. p. 156.

[2] As appears beyond all dispute from the acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*, &c. Ibid. p. 159.

N. B. It is strange, that a Protestant Divine should lay so much stress on these Acts, as to make them the unquestionable vouchers of true miracles: which, while they excite our compassion for the sufferings, and our admiration of the courage of these two female Martyrs, yet shock and disgust us at the same time, to see all this virtue and fortitude derived, not from the calm and sober principles of the Gospel, but from the impetuosity of a wild and extravagant enthusiasm. Among many other instances of this, written by *Perpetua* herself, in her prison, she relates what follows. “That, as she was praying with the rest of her fellow martyrs, she happened to mention, all of a sudden, and to her own surprize, the name of *Dinocrates*, which had not come into her mind of a long time, till that very moment. It was the name of her brother who died of a Cancer in his face, when he was but seven years old. This renewed her grief for his unhappy case; and convinced her, that she ought to pray for him, as being now held wor-

thy to intercede for others: whereupon she began to put up her prayers and sighs for him to the Lord, and in that same night received this vision. She saw *Denocrates* coming out of a dark place, in which there were many others with him, greatly tormented by heat and thirst; with a sordid and pale countenance, and the same wound in his face, which he had when he died. There was a pool of water also in the place, but with a brink deeper than the Statue of the boy, who stretched himself out, as desirous to drink, but was not able to reach the water. This grieved *Perpetua*, who, as soon as she was awake, knew by this vision, that her brother was in an uneasy state: but being assured, that she could relieve him by her prayers, she continued to intercede day and night, with groans and tears, that his punishment might be remitted for her sake. Upon which, she shortly after received another vision, when the place, which before was dark, appeared bright and shining; and *Dinocrates* was now quite clean, well dressed and refreshed; and instead of the wound, with a Scar onely in his face: and the brink of the pool was reduced

Christian,* of eminent zeal and piety, who is said to have suffered the most cruel tortures by the command of the Emperor
Julian;

“ to the height onely of his navel, whence
“ he instantly drew water: on the brink
“ also stood a vial full of water out of
“ which he began to drink, yet the water
“ in it never failed: so that the boy,
“ having now satisfied his thirst, went
“ away chearfully to play, as children
“ usually do, by which *Perpetua* under-
“ stood, that her brother was removed
“ from the place of his punishment.”

The case of this infant *Dinocrates* was alledged by an antient writer, in a controversy with *St. Austin*, as a proof, that baptism was not absolutely necessary to an admission into paradise: to which *St. Austin* answers, “ that tho’ the boy was
“ but seven years old, he might probably
“ be baptized at that age, and after baptism be guilty of lying or denying
“ Christ; or in the time of persecution
“ might be drawn perhaps by his impious
“ Father, who was an Heathen, into
“ some act of Idolatry, for which he was
“ doomed to a place of torments, till his
“ pardon was obtained by the prayers of
“ his Sister, then going to die for Christ.” [de Origin. anim. l. 1. c. x. and l. 3. c. 9.] From these and several other visions of the same kind, which are related in the same Acts, the Romanists draw what they take to be a demonstrative and experimental proof of every thing, which they teach with regard to the other world: of an Hell, a Purgatory, a Limbus, or separate place of Infants, and another Limbus of the Antient Fathers, with a Paradise for the immediate reception of Martyrs: and that the dead may be relieved also from their pains by the prayers of the living. [Vid. Ruinart,

Acta Martyr. de SS. Perpet. & Felic. § vii and viii, & notas Holstenii & Poffini.]

Such are the miracles, which *Dr. Chapman* affirms to be indisputably proved by the Acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*; and such the doctrines, which are deduced from them: but tho’ neither the enthusiasm nor the Popery, with which they abound, could check his Protestant zeal from ascribing a divine authority to them, there is another circumstance still belonging to them, sufficient, one would think, to have destroyed their whole credit with an Advocate of primitive and orthodox Antiquity: for the original Collector and publisher of them appears to have been one of those Heretics and disciples of *Montanus*, who gave so much disturbance to the Church in the early ages. This is declared to be most certain by the learned *Valesius*, tho’ a Papist; and notwithstanding the pains, which *Mr. Ruinart*, the Editor of the Martyrologies, takes to confute that imputation, the truth of it seems to be unquestionable. *Valesius* indeed, like a good Catholic, desires, that this circumstance may not detract, either from the authority of these Acts, or the veneration due to those holy Martyrs, and charges it as a piece of craft on the Montanists, that they made use of these visions, to support the credit of their own dreams. But when we reflect on the enthusiastic spirit of *Perpetua*, and with what a confidence she relates her wonderfull visions and intercourse with the Lord; and when we find her character and revelations mentioned with praise by *Tertullian*, then a Montanist, it is highly probable, that *Perpetua* also herself was tainted

Julian; but after he was left for dead by his tormentors, was providentially preserved and restored to life. “ *Ruffinus* happening to meet with him many years after, took occasion to ask him, whether he had been sensible of any very sharp pains under the agony of his torture; to which he answered; that he had felt but very little, and that a certain young person stood by him all the time, wiping away the sweat, which flowed from him, strengthening his mind, and filling him with delight rather than torment, during his continuance on the rack [1].

Lastly, we must add to these several motives, the scandal of flying from persecution, and the infamy, which attended the lapsed Christians; so as to make life hardly supportable to those, who through fear of the rack and a cruel death, had been tempted to deny their faith, or guilty of any compliance with the idolatry of their persecutors. All which topics, when displayed with art and eloquence by their ablest Teachers, were sufficient, to inflame the multitude to what pitch of zeal

stained with the same Heresy; and that *St. Austin* consequently, as an eminent Critic has observed, was drawn by some false tradition concerning these Martyrs, to honor them as true Saints, when in reality, they were Heretics. [Vid. *Ittig. Dissert. de Hæresarch.* Sect. 2. c. 13. § 28.]

From the same Acts we see likewise, as I have said, how these primitive Martyrs went out to meet their cruel deaths with a firm persuasion, that they should feel no pain from them. *Felicitas* was eight months gone with child, when their execution drew near, and being afraid, as her companions also were, that on the account of her pregnancy, she should be left by them alone in the way to their

common hope: they all put up their joint prayer to heaven, three days before they suffered, upon which she fell presently into labor, and was delivered of a female child: but in the time of delivery, when she expressed a sharp sense of the pains which she felt; one of the Servants of the prison said to her; *if you lament so much now; what will you do, when you are thrown to the beasts, which you despised, when you refused to sacrifice?* to which she answered; *I now feel, what I suffer; but then, another will be in me, who will feel for me, because I am to suffer for him.* Vid. *Act. ibid.* §. xv.

[1] *Socrat. Hist.* l. 3. c. 19. it. *Sozom.* l. 5. c. xx

they

they pleased, so as to make them even provoke, and offer themselves forwardly to the most dreadful torments. “ Who “ is there, says *Cyprian*, who would not strive with all his “ might, to arrive at so great a glory; to be a friend of God: “ enter into present joy with Christ; and after earthly torments “ receive heavenly rewards? If it be glorious to worldly sol- “ diers, after conquering an enemy, to return triumphant “ into their country, how much greater glory is it, after “ having vanquished the Devil, to return triumphant into “ paradise, whence *Adam* was expelled, and there to erect “ trophies over that very enemy, who expelled him? to accom- “ pany God, when he comes to take vengeance on his ene- “ mies; to be placed at his side, when he sits in judgement; to “ be made coheirs with Christ; equal with Angels; and toge- “ ther with *the Apostles, Prophets, and Patriarchs*, to rejoice in “ the possession of an heavenly Kingdom? These things you “ are to bear in your minds and memories. What persecu- “ tion can get the better of such meditations? what torments “ be superior to them [1]?”.

These principles and motives, I say, had such force, as some- times to animate even bad men, to indure a Martydom. For the Heretics also had their Martyrs, as all history informs us, as well as the Orthodox; who yet in their common sufferings and death, continued to testify their mutual averfion, *and to refuse all communion with each other* [2]. But by bad men, who be-
came

[1] Exhortat. ad Martyr. c. 12. This may serve as a specimen of that true and noble and genuine eloquence of *Cyprian*, which, as Dr. *Marshall*, the Translator of his works says, *resembles an impetuous torrent, which carries away with it every thing it meets; since he was capable of raising what*

passions he pleased, and of persuading us, to do whatever he had a mind to. Pref. to his Translation, p. 17.

[2] Καὶ ἐπειδὴ οἱ ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς κατὰ αἰλή-
θειας πίστεως μαρτύριον κληθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς
ἰσχυρίας τύχῳσι μὲν τινῶν τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς
τῶν Φρυγῶν αἰρέσεως λεγομένων μαρτύρων,
L. l. διαφί-

came Martyrs, I do not mean such onely, as were called Heretics, for that name was often given even to the best; but the proud, the contentious, the drunken, and the lewd, among the orthodox Martyrs themselves: of all which kinds, there were many, as *St. Cyprian* complains, who, after they had nobly sustained the trial of Martyrdom, and escaped with life from the torments of their persecutors, yet by a petulant, factious, and profligate behaviour, gave great scandal and disturbance to the discipline of the Church.

This is expressly declared by *Cyprian* in several of his letters: in one of which, addressed to the whole body of the Confessors, after he has signified his joy, “ that the greatest part of them
“ were made the better by the honor of their confession, and
“ preserved their glory, by a quiet and inoffensive carriage,
“ yet he had been informed, he says, of others, who infected
“ their society, and disgraced the laudable name of Confessor
“ by their evil conversation: some of them being drunken and
“ lascivious, some puffed up and swollen with pride: while
“ others, as he had heard with the utmost grief, defiled their
“ bodies, the temples of God, sanctified by their confession,
“ with the promiscuous and infamous use of lewd women [1].”
In one of his letters also to the Clergy, he says, “ I am griev-
“ ed, when I hear how some of them run about, wickedly and
“ insolently, spending their time in trifles, or in sowing dis-
“ cord; and defiling the members of Christ, and which have
“ already confessed Christ, by the unlawfull use of women [2].”

διαφείσθαι τὴν πρὸς αὐτὰς, καὶ μὴ κοινω-
σαίτες αὐτοῖς τελευτήσαι. *Euseb. Hist.* l. 5.
c. 16. it. c. 18.

[1] Sed quosdam audio inficere nume-
rum vestrum, & laudem præcipui nominis
prava sua conversatione destruere, &c.
Ac. Epist. 6.

[2] Doleo enim, quando audio quos-
dam improbe & insolenter discurrere, &
ad ineptias vel discordias vacare: Christi
membra & jam Christum confessa, per
concubitus illicitos inquinare. *Ep.* 5. it. 7.
22, 23.

And in another treatise, where he is touching the same subject,
 “ let no man wonder, says he, that some of the Confessors
 “ commit such horrible and grievous sins; for confession does
 “ not secure them from the snares and temptations of the
 “ Devil—otherwise we should never after see any frauds,
 “ and whoredoms and adulteries in Confessors, which I now
 “ groan and grieve to see in some of them [1].”

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[1] De Unitat. Eccles. vers. fin. p. 185.

N. B. The name of Martyr was given, as I have said above, to all those, who had suffered tortures for the public profession of their faith before the Magistrates. And the title of Confessor to those, who, after making the same profession, had been committed onely to prison, in order to be reserved to the same tortures, or punished with death. Whence *Tertullian* calls them, *Martyres designati*, or Martyrs elect, [ad Martyr. 1. vid. Cypr. Ep. 8. & Not. Rigalt. 8.]

But with regard to this case of Martyrdom, I cannot forbear observing a strange contrariety both of principle and practice in these primitive ages, between the times of *Polycarp* and *Tertullian*. The Martyrdom of *Polycarp*, in the narrative of it, written by the Church of *Smyrna*, is twice called an *Evangelical Martyrdom*, or performed according to the rules of the Gospel and in imitation of Christ; [§ 1, 19.] who did not offer himself forwardly to his enemies, but withdrew himself from them, and waited till he was betrayed into their hands: and commanded his Apostles also, when they were persecuted in one City, to flee into another. [Matt. x. 29.] When the persecution therefore grew hot in *Smyrna*, *Polycarp* withdrew himself from that City into the neighbouring Villages; shifting

his quarters still from Village to Village, to avoid his pursuers, till he was betrayed by one of his own domestics; [§ 9.] and so fulfilled both the example and precept of our Lord. And upon the same authority also *Clement of Alexandria* declares it to be a sin, and a kind of self-murder, not to flee on such an occasion from the malice of their persecutors. [Stro. 1. 4. c. x.]

Tertullian, on the contrary, about half a century after, wrote a book against *all flight in persecution*, in which he labors to prove, “ that our Saviour’s precept was
 “ temporary, and peculiar to the circumstances of those times, and addressed
 “ wholly to the Apostles; who yet afterwards, when those circumstances were
 “ changed, both practised and prescribed a
 “ different conduct. That it was base in
 “ private Christians to fly, and much
 “ more in Bishops and Pastors.—That a
 “ good Shepherd will lay down his life
 “ for his flock, but a bad one fly at the
 “ sight of the wolf, and leave his sheep to
 “ be torn in pieces” — [p. 97, 996.] He inveighs also against another practice, which seems to have been common among the Christians of those days, of *ransoming themselves from their persecutors by a sum of money*; and declares it to be “ an affront
 “ to God to redeem those by money,
 “ whom

It is not my design, by what is said here on the subject of Martyrdom, to detract in any manner from the real merit and just praise of those primitive Martyrs, who with an invincible constancy, sustained the cause of Christ, at the expence of their lives. It is reasonable to believe, that, generally speaking, they were the best sort of Christians, distinguished by their exemplary zeal and piety; and the chief ornaments of the Church in their several ages: yet it is certain, that they were subject still to the same passions, prejudices, and errors, which were common to all the other pious Christians of the same age. My sole view therefore is, to expose the vanity of those extravagant honors, and that idolatrous worship, which are paid

“ whom Christ had redeemed with his blood: and to make secret bargains with an informer or soldier, or knavish President, for the life of a Christian (whom Christ had purchased and set free in the face of the world) as if it were for a thief. [p. 697, 698.] He exhorts them therefore to commit themselves intirely to God: who could either throw them into the midst of their enemies, while they were flying, or cover them from danger even in the midst of the people: and he shews by an eminent example, that neither flight nor money was effectual to procure their safety. *Rutilius*, says he, a most holy Martyr, after he had oft escaped by flying from place to place, and redeemed himself, as he imagined, from all danger by his money, yet in all this security, was unexpectedly apprehended, carried before the President, and put to a severe torture, for the correction, I believe, of his flight: and being committed at last to the flames, he then ascribed the Martyrdom, which he had been avoiding, to the mercy of

“ God: and what else did the Lord intend “ to teach us by this example, but that we “ ought not to fly from persecution?” [p. 93.]

These were the principles, which generally prevailed in the Church from the time of *Tertullian*: so that when two of the most eminent Bishops, who succeeded him, *St. Cyprian of Carthage*, and *St. Dionysius of Alexandria*, found it expedient in a time of persecution, to preserve their lives by retiring from their several Sees, they had no other excuse to recur to, but the plea of a divine revelation, and the express command of God for it: the precept and example of our Saviour; the practice of his Apostles; and the *Evangelical Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*, being no longer of any force, against the Enthusiastic zeal, and visionary temper of that age. Which zeal however, because it happened to be ridiculed by an infidel writer, is strenuously defended by *Dr. Chapman*, in the very words and reasoning of *Tertullian*. See *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 157.

to them indiscriminately by the Church of *Rome*; and to shew especially, that the circumstance of their Martyrdom, while it gives the strongest proof of the sincerity of their faith and trust in the promises of the Gospel, adds nothing to the character of their knowledge or their sagacity; nor consequently, any weight to their testimony, in preference to that of any other just and devout Christian whatsoever [1].

§. 4. It has been frequently objected by my Antagonists, that to reject the unanimous testimony of the Fathers, in their reports of the primitive miracles, will destroy the faith and credit of all history.

[1] *Savonarola*, a most pious and learned Monk of the fifteenth century, preached with great force and eloquence in *Italy*, against the corruptions of the Court of *Rome*, and the flagitious life and practices of *Pope Alexander* the sixth, who not being able to silence him, condemned him to be hanged: of whom *Dr. Jer. Taylor* tells the following story.

“ Two *Franciscan Friars*, says he, offered themselves to the fire, to prove *Savonarola* to be an Heretic. But a certain *Jacobin* offered himself to the fire, to prove, that *Savonarola* had true revelations, and was no Heretic. In the mean time *Savonarola* preached, but made no such confident offer, nor durst he venture at that new kind of *fire ordeal*, and put the case, that all four had passed through the fire, and died in the flames: what would that have proved? Had he been a Heretic, or no Heretic, the more or the less, for the confidence of these zealous Idiots? If we mark it, a great many arguments, on which many Sects rely, are no better probation than this.” *Lib. of Proph. Ep. Dedic. p. 39.*

There is another story likewise, somewhat applicable to the present purpose, which I have elsewhere made use of, as it is told by *Sir Tho. Roe*; “ that the house “ and Church of the *Jesuits* in *India* happening to be burnt, the Crucifix was found untouched, which was given out as a miracle. Upon this, the King sent for the *Jesuit*, and having examined him about the fact, made this proposal to him, *that if he would cast the Crucifix into the fire before his face, and it did not burn, he would turn Christian*. The *Jesuit* would not venture the credit of his religion on so hazardous an experiment, yet offered to cast himself into the fire as a proof of his own faith, which the King would not allow.” For he had sense enough to know the difference, between the effect of a miracle and a martyrdom; that the last could prove nothing but the *Jesuit’s* sincerity, in what he professed to believe; whereas the first would yield the strongest confirmation to the truth also of what he taught. [See *Lett. from Rome, Prefat. Disc. p. 100.*]

This was the constant cant of all the zealots, even of the Heathen world, whenever any of their established superstitions were attacked by men of sense. “ If these things, they cried, “ approved by the wisdom of our ancestors, and confirmed by “ the consent of ages, can be shewn at last to be false, we “ must burn all our annals, and believe nothing at all [1].” And the same outcry, as *Eusebius* tells us; was made by them also against the Christians, when the Gospel first began to spread itself among them: “ that to reject a belief and wor- “ ship universally established by Kings, Legislators, and Phi- “ losophers of all nations, whether *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, was “ an impious apostacy from the rites of their ancestors, and a “ contradiction to the sense and judgement of mankind [2].” The Christians on the other hand constantly derided this plea, and declared, “ that to follow the inventions of their ancestors “ without any judgement or examinations, and to be led per- “ petually by others, like brute animals, was to preclude them- “ selves from that search of wisdom and knowledge, which is “ natural to man [3].” Yet when it came at last to their own turn, to find the authority of ages on their side, they took up the same plea, which they had before rejected; and urge it at this day, as the principal objection to Protestantism; “ that “ it is a *mere novelty*, which had no existence in the world “ before *Luther*, contradictory to the practice of all the pri- “ mitive Saints and Martyrs of the Catholic Church, and to “ the unanimous consent of fifteen centuries.”

[1] *Negemus omnia; comburamus annales; ficta hæc esse dicamus, &c.* Cic. de Divin. l. 1. 17.

[2] *Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 2.*

[3] *Quare cum sapere, id est, sapien-*

tiam querere, omnibus sit innatum; sapientiam sibi adiungunt, qui sine ullo iudicio inventa majorum probant, & ab aliis, pecudum more, ducuntur, &c. Lactant. Divin. Instit. l. 2. c. 8.

If this objection therefore had ever been found to have any force in it, the antient Christians could never have overruled the impostures of Paganism; nor our Reformers, the superstitions of Popery. But in truth, when it comes to be seriously considered, it will appear to have no sense at all in it: and if the Doctors *Chapman* and *Berriman*, who now revive and so zealously urge it, were called upon to exp lane themselves upon it, they would find it difficult, I dare say, to tell us what they mean by it. If they mean, that a contempt of those miracles, which they would persuade us to believe, would necessarily derive the same contempt on history itself; all experience has shewn the contrary; for tho' there have been doubters and contemnners of such miracles in all ages, yet history has maintained it's ground through them all. During the three first centuries, the whole world in a manner not onely doubted, but rejected the miracles of the primitive Christians: yet history was written and read with the same pleasure and profit as before, and applied by the unbelievers themselves to the confirmation of their very doubts. Our commerce with the times past, as they are represented to us in history, is of much the same kind, with our manner of dealing with the present. We find many men in the world, whose fidelity we have just ground to suspect; yet a number of others, whom we can readily trust, sufficient to support that credit and mutual confidence, by which the business of life is carried on: just so in antient History; we find many things, of which we have cause to doubt; many, which we are obliged to reject; yet it's use still subsists, and from real and indisputable facts, supplies sufficient matter both of instruction and entertainment to every judicious reader.

If our Doctors therefore mean any thing by the objection, which we are examining, it must be this; that the same principle, which induces us to suspect the primitive miracles, and particularly those of *Symeon Stylites*, when so forcibly and credibly attested, must induce us also, if we are consistent with ourselves, to suspect every thing, that is delivered to us from antient history. But they widely mistake the matter; and do not at all reflect on what I have intimated above, that the history of miracles is of a kind totally different, from that of common events, the one, to be suspected always of course, without the strongest evidence to confirm it; the other, to be admitted of course, without as strong reason to suspect it. Ordinary facts, related by a credible person, furnish no cause of doubting from the nature of the thing: but if they be strange and extraordinary; doubts naturally arise, and in proportion as they approach towards the marvellous, those doubts still increase and grow stronger: for mere honesty will not warrant them; we require other qualities in the Historian; a degree of knowledge, experience, and discernment, sufficient to judge of the whole nature and circumstances of the case: and if any of these be wanting, we necessarily suspend our belief. A weak man indeed, if honest, may attest common events, as credibly as the wisest; yet can hardly make any report, that is credible, of such as are miraculous; because a suspicion will always occur, that his weakness, and imperfect knowledge of the extent of human art, had been imposed upon by the craft of cunning Jugglers. On the other hand, should a man of known abilities and judgement relate to us things miraculous, or undertake to perform them himself, the very notion of his skill, without an assurance also of his integrity, would excite
only

onely the greater fuspicion of him [1]; efppecially, if he had any intereft to promote, or any favorite opinion to recommend, by the authority of fuch works: becaufe a pretenfion to miracles, has, in all ages and nations, been found the moft effectual instrument of Impoftors, towards deluding the multitude, and gaining their ends upon them.

There is not a fingle Hiftorian of Antiquity, whether Greek or Latin, who has not recorded *Oracles, prodigies, prophecies and miracles*, on the occafion of fome memorable events, or revolutions of States and Kingdoms. Many of thefe are attested in the graveft manner and by the graveft writers, and were firmly believed at the time by the populace: yet it is certain, that there is not one of them, which we can reafonably take to be genuin: not one, but what was either wholly forged, or from the opportunity of fome unusual circumftance attending it, improved and aggravated into fomething fupernatural. This was undoubtedly the cafe of all the Heathen miracles; and though it may hurt in fome meafure the general credit of miracles, yet, as experience has plainly fhewn, it has not in any degree affected the credit of common hiftory. For example, *Dionyfius of Halicarnaffus* is efteemed one of the moft faithfull and accurate Hiftorians of Antiquity: we take his word without fcruple, and preferably even to the Roman writers, in his account of the civil affairs of *Rome*; yet we laugh at the fictitious miracles, which he has interfperfed in it. “ In the war with the *Latins*, he tells us, “ how the Gods, *Caffor and Pollux*, appeared vifibly on white “ horfes, and fought on the fide of *the Romans*, who by their “ affiftance gained a complete victory; and that for a perfe-

[1] Quo quis verfutior & callidior eft, probitatis. Cic. Off. 2. 1x.
hoc invidiof & fufpectior, detracta opinione

"tual memorial of it, a Temple was publicly erected, and a yearly festival, sacrifice and procession instituted to the honour of these Deities {1}." Now tho' no body at this day believes a tittle of the miracle, yet the faith of History is not hurt by it. We admit the battel and the victory; and take the miraculous part to be, what it certainly was, the fiction of the Commanders or persons interested; contrived for the sake of some private, as well as public benefit, which the nature of the case will easily suggest.

Thus in the narrative also, above mentioned, of the Martyrdom of *St. Polycarp*, the point of history is, that he was condemned to death at *Smyrna*, of which he was Bishop, and there actually burnt at the Stake, for his profession of the Christian faith. We have no doubt therefore of his Martyrdom, yet may reasonably pause at the miracles, which are said to have attended it. The voice pretended to come from heaven, was heard onely by a few; and that in a time of such hurry, in which nothing could be heard distinctly. If such a voice therefore had been uttered by any one in the croud, as it was hardly possible to discern whence it came, so those whose zeal and imagination were particularly affected by so moving an occasion, might easily mistake it for miraculous. The flame also

{1} Vid. Dionys. Hal. Antiqu. l. 6. p. 337. Edit. Oxon.

N. B. A late Historian of our own Kingdom, in his description of the battel of *Worcester*, between *Charles II.* and *Oliver Cromwell*, has delivered a story to posterity, concerning a certain contract made in form, between *Oliver* and the *Devil*, in a personal conference. Which story was so strongly attested, that he thought himself obliged to insert it, as I

heard him say, by the advice of some learned Friends. But the faith of history would rest on a very slippery bottom, could it be shaken in any degree by our contempt of so silly a tale: which tho' no man of a sound judgement can think credible, yet none will conceive the least doubt on that account, about the reality of the battel or the other circumstances of it, as they are related by the same Historian. See *Echard's Hist. of Engl.*

is said to have made an arch around his body, and could not burn it: an appearance, which might easily happen from the common effects of the wind, or something at least so like it as to afford matter enough to a superstitious fancy, to supply the rest. But the circumstance of a *Dove flying out of his body, when pierced by a sword*, is beyond all belief: or if a *Dove* was really seen to fly out of the wood, which was prepared to consume him, it might have been conveyed thither, probably by design, in order to be let loose at a certain moment: as in the funerals of the Roman Emperors, an Eagle was always observed to fly out of the funeral pile, as soon as it began to blaze, which was supposed to convey the soul of the deceased into heaven: of which a solemn deposition was constantly made upon oath, in order to the Deification of those Emperors [1].

But the case of witchcraft affords the most effectual proof of the truth of what I am advancing. There is not in all history any one miraculous fact, so authentically attested as the existence of witches. All Christian nations whatsoever have consented in the belief of them and provided capital laws against them: in consequence of which, many hundreds of both Sexes have suffered a cruel death. In our own country, great numbers have been condemned to die, at different times, after a public trial, by the most eminent Judges of the Kingdom: and in some places, for a perpetual memorial of their diabolical practices, anniversary sermons and solemnities have been piously

[1] Ἀέλος δὲ τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀφ' ἑρθεῖς ἀνιπ-
ταίω, ὡς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῆς εἰς τὸν ἔρανον
ἀναφέρει. Dio. de Fun August. l. 56. p.
598.

Γενομένη δὲ τῆς, αἰλός τις ἐξ αὐτῆς
ἀνιπταίω. καὶ ὁ μὲν Περσινᾶς ἔτιως ἡθανα-
τίσθη. Id. de Fun. Pertinac. l. 74. p. 842.

Καὶ τί γὰρ τῆς ἀποθνήσκουσας παρ'
ὑμῶν αὐτοκράτορας αἰεὶ ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι
ἀξιοῦντες, καὶ ὁμνύοντα τινα προσέγειε ἑωρ-
κέναι· ἐκ τῆς πυρᾶς ἀνερχόμενον εἰς τὸν
ἔρανον τὸν καλῶς αἰεὶ Καίσαρα. Just.
Martyr. Apol. 1. p. 32. Ed. Thirlb.

instituted, and subsist at this day, to propagate a detestation of them to all posterity [1]. Now to deny the reality of Facts

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[1] In the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* reign, the Court seems to have been greatly alarmed by an imaginary increase of this Infernal Art, and the horrible mischiefs, which it was then actually perpetrating in the Kingdom; and which were loudly proclaimed from the Pulpit, by many of the celebrated Preachers. Among the rest, it is surprizing to perceive, to what a length of superstition and credulity the great Bishop *Jewel* was carried on this occasion, by his prejudices and prepossession in favor of this popular delusion: a Prelate as venerable for his piety, learning and judgement, as any, in the earliest ages of the Church: who, in a Sermon preached before the Queen, taking occasion to touch upon this subject, addresses himself to Her in the following words: "it may please your Grace to understand, that this kind of People, I mean witches and sorcerers, within these few years are marvelously increased within your Grace's realm. These eyes have seen most evident and manifest marks of their wickedness. Your Grace's Subjects pine away, even unto death; their colour fades; their flesh rotteth: their speech is benumbed; their senses bereft. Wherefore your poor Subject's humble petition to your Highness is, that the laws touching such Malefactors may be put in due execution. For the shoal of them is great, their doings horrible, their malice intolerable, their examples most miserable: and I pray God, they never practise farther than upon the subject." Upon which passage Mr. *Styke* remarks, that the remonstrances of this

kind made by this Bishop and others gave occasion, to bring a Bill into the next Parliament, for making *Incantments and witchcraft Felony*. See annals at the Reformat. vol. 1. p. 8.

When *Tertullian*, in proof of the miraculous powers, which were claimed by the Christians of that age, challenges the Heathen Magistrates, to come and see how easily the Christian *Exorcists* could drive Devils out of the bodies of men, he might be assured probably at the same time, that the notice of his challenge would never reach those Magistrates, or at least, that they would never pay any regard to it: yet pluming himself, as it were, upon it he adds; and *what can be more manifest than this operation, what more convincing than this proof?* [Apolog. c. 23.] But I would ask the warmest advocates of the primitive miracles, whether this *convincing proof of Tertullian*, or the express testimony of any other Father, or any number of them can in any manner be compared with that strength of evidence, which, through all ages, affirmed the existence of witches and their direfull practices, by the most solemn acts of Kings and Parliaments and whole nation; who, after many public trials and the strictest examinations have constantly attested the reality of the facts and crimes, with which they were charged, of inflicting horrible pain and diseases, and destroying the lives of many innocent People, by the force of their charms and sorceries. See the printed trials of *nineteen witches*, ten of whom were condemned together at *Lancaster*, 1612, where the Judge, in passing sentence of death upon them,

speaks

so solemnly attested, and so universally believed, seems to give the lie to the sense and experience of all Christendom; to the wisest and best of every nation, to public monuments subsisting to our own times: yet the incredibility of the thing prevailed and was found at last too strong for all this force of human testimony: so that the belief of witches is now utterly extinct, and quietly buried without involving history in it's ruin, or leaving even the least disgrace or censure upon it.

There is another instance also, within our own times, more directly applicable to our present purpose. I mean the pretended miracles of the late Abbé de Paris, which made such a noise in France a few years ago, and are still believed by a great part of that Kingdom, or by all perhaps, who believe any other miracles of that Church. This Abbé was a zealous *Jansenist*, and warm opposer of that Bull or Constitution of *Pope Clemens XI.* called *Unigenitus*, by which all the doctrines of his sect were expressly condemned. He died in 1725, and was buried in the Church-yard of *St. Medard* in *Paris*; whither the great reputation of his sanctity drew many People to visit his tomb, and pay their devotions to him, as to a Saint: and this concurrence gradually increasing made him soon be considered, as a subject, proper to revive the credit of that party, now utterly depressed by the ~~power~~ of the Jesuits, supported by the authority of the Court. Within six years therefore after his death the confident report of miracles, wrought at his tomb, began to alarm not only the City of *Paris*, but the whole nation: while infinite crouds were perpetually pressing to the place, and proclaiming the benefits received from the Saint: nor could all the

speaks of many cruel and barbarous murders, and destroying the cattle of their neighbours, of which they had been guilty, besides other crimes, of tormenting the bodies

power

power of the Government give a check to the rapidity of this superstition, till by inclosing the tomb within a wall, they effectually obstructed all access to it [1].

This expedient, tho' it put an end to the external worship of the Saint, could not shake the credit of his miracles: distinct accounts of which were carefully drawn up, and dispersed among the people, with an attestation of them much more strong and authentic, than what has ever been alledged for the miracles of any other age, since the days of the Apostles. *Monf. de Montgeron*, a person of eminent rank in *Paris*, [2] published a select number of them, in a pompous volume in quarto, which he dedicated to the King and presented to him in Person; being induced to the publication of them, as he declares, by the incontestable evidence of the facts; by which he himself, from a libertin and professed Deist, became a sincere convert to the Christian faith. But besides the collection of *Mr. de Montgeron*, several other collections were made, containing in the whole above an hundred miracles, which are all published together in three volumes, with their original vouchers, certificates, affidavits, and letters annexed to each of them at full length.

The greatest part of these miracles were employed in the cures of desperate diseases, in their last and deplored state, and after all human remedies had for ~~many~~ many years been tried upon them in vain: but the Patients no sooner addressed themselves to the tomb of this Saint, than the most inveterate cases, and complications of Palsies, Apoplexies and Dropsies, and even blindness and lameness &c. were either instantly cured,

[1] This step gave occasion to the following Epigram, which was fixed upon the inclosure, in the stile of the Royal Edicts.

De par le Roy. Defense a Dieu
De faire miracles, en ce lieu.

[2] Conseiller au Parlement de Paris.

or greatly relieved, and within a short time after wholly removed. All which cures were performed in the Church-yard of St. *Medard*, in the open view of the people, and with so general a belief of the finger of God in them, that many *Infidels*, *Debauchés*, *Schismatics*, and *Heretics* are said to have been converted by them to the Catholic faith. And the reality of them is attested by some of the principal Physicians and Surgeons in France, as well as the Clergy of the first dignity; several of whom were eye-witnesses of them, who presented a verbal process of each to the Archbishops, with a petition signed by above twenty *Curés* or Rectors of the Parishes of *Paris*, desiring that they might be authentically registred, and solemnly published to the people, as true miracles.

I have seen an answer to these miracles by a Protestant writer, *Mr. Des Voeux*; who does not deny the facts, but the miraculous nature of them onely, which by many reasons he endeavours to render suspected. Yet another writer on the same side, declares, that all his reasons are too weak, to do them any hurt; and that there is no other way of shaking their credit, than by shewing them to be the works of the Devil. Which he undertakes to prove, in three letters to the said *Mr. Des Voeux*, to be the genuin character of them.

Let our Declamers then on the authority of the Fathers, and the faith of history, produce if they can, any evidence of the primitive miracles, half so strong, as what is alledged for the miracles of the *Abbe de Paris*: or if they cannot do it, let them give us a reason, why we must receive the one, and reject the other: or if they fail likewise in this, let them be so ingenuous at last as to confess, that we have no other part left, but either to admit them all, or reject them all; for otherwise, they can

never be thought to act consistently. And if, from their avowed principles and blind deference to authority, we may guess at their real sentiments in the present case, they will be as little scrupulous about the modern, as the antient miracles of the Church, but patiently admit them all; as being more agreeable to that rule, which is prescribed by their primitive Guides; “that the true disciples of Christ, *have nothing more to do with curiosity or inquiry, but when they are once become believers, their sole business is to believe on* [1].”

Again, The celebrated Historian, *Mr. de Vertot*, whose *revolutions of Rome, of Sweden and of Portugal*, afford so much entertainment to the public, has written a defence also of a certain miracle, which is imagined to do some honor to the Church and Kingdom of *France*: I mean the miracle of *the sacred vial, or Sainte Ampoule*, as it is called, with which their Kings are anointed at their coronation [2].

This Vial is said to have been brought from heaven by a Dove, for the baptismal unction of *Clovis, the first Christian King of France*, and dropped into the hands of *St. Remigius*, then Bishop of *Rheims*, about the end of the fifth century: where it has been preserved ever since for the purpose of anoint-

[1] Nobis curiositate non opus est post Jesum Christum, nec inquisitione post Evangelium; cum credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere. Tertull. de Præscript. Hæret. §. 8.

[2] The Abbé de Vertot begins his *Dissertation on this vial*, in the following manner.

“There has scarce ever been a more sensible and illustrious mark of the visible protection of God, over the Monarchy of *France*, than the celebrated miracle of the sacred vial. On the day of

“Great *Clovis's* baptism, heaven declared itself in favor of that Prince and his successors, in a particular manner; and by way of preference to all the other Sovereigns of Christendom. So that we may justly apply to every one of our Kings, on the day of their coronation, the words of the Royal Prophet. “*God, even thy God has anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows.*” *Dissertat. au sujet de la sainte Ampoule.* — Dans les *Memoires De l'Acad des Inscrip. & bell. Let.* Tom. 2. p. 665.

ing all succeeding Kings [1], and it's divine descent is said to be confirmed by this miracle; that *as soon as the coronation is over, the oil in the Vial begins to waſt and vaniſh, but is conſtantly renewed of itſelf, for the ſervice of each new Coronation* [2].

The *Abbe de Vertot* defends the truth of this miracle by the authority of ſeveral witneſſes, who lived at the time of *Remigius* or near to it; and of many later writers alſo, who give teſtimony to the ſame, through each ſucceeding age. Yet a learned Profeſſor at *Utrecht*, in a diſſertation upon this ſubject, treats it as a mere forgery, or pious fraud, contrived to ſupport the dignity of the *Kings and Clergy of France*; and ranks it in the ſame claſs with the *Palladium of Troy*; the *Ancilia of old Rome*; and the *Croſs, which Conſtantin pretended to ſee in the heavens*; and the reſt of thoſe political fictions, which we meet with in the hiſtories of all ages [3].

Now what will our Advocates of the primitive miracles ſay to this? Will they tell us here, as they have often done on ſimilar occaſions, that by rejecting the authority of *Mr. Vertot* and his witneſſes in this ſtory, we deſtroy the faith of all his other ſtories, and can no longer take his word for any thing, which he has related of *Rome*, or *Sweden*, or *Portugal*? Let them talk at this ſilly rate as long as they pleaſe, men of ſenſe will always know, how to diſtinguiſh in ſuch caſes; how to extract all the inſtruction, which is offered to them, in one part of his

[1] ——— Idem primus & omnes
Poſt, ipſum Reges, Francorum ad
ſceptra vocati,
Quando coronantur, oleo ſacrantur
eodem. — ib. p. 674.

[2] ——— cujus prece rorem
Miſit in ampullam cœleſtem Reſtor
Olympi,
Corpus ut hoc lavacro Regis debe-
ret inungi,

Deficeretque liquor, ibi corpore
Regis inuncto.

Nic. de Braia. De S. Remigio.

[3] Vid. Everard Ottonis. J. C. Diſſer-
tat. &c. §. iv. p. 365. De Unctione Re-
menſi. Trajeſt. ad Rhen. quarto. 1723.

Trojani *Palladium*. — Virgilius *lapſa An-
cilia cælo* — veneratur, Conſtantine, litteras
iv τῷτο νικᾷ in cælo legiſſe fertur, &c.
vid. ibid.

writings; yet guard themselves from all the superstition, which is inculcated in the other. They know, that, on subjects of common history, a writer of sense and credit can hardly have any other motive of writing, but to please and instruct; and to illustrate the truth of facts, as far as he was able, by the perspicuity of his stile, and the proper disposition of his materials: but on subjects of a miraculous kind, they know likewise, how forcibly the prejudices of education, a superstitious turn of mind, the interests of a party, or the views of ambition are apt to operate on a defender of those miracles, which the government and religion of his country are engaged to support.

These few instances are sufficient to evince the reasonableness and prudence of suspending our assent to reports of a miraculous kind, tho' attested by an authority, which might safely be trusted, in the report of ordinary events. They teach us also how opinions, wholly absurd and contrary to nature, may gain credit and establishment through ages and nations, which, by the force of education, custom, and example, have once contracted a superstitious and credulous turn: till being checked from time to time by the gradual improvements of science, and the successive efforts of reason, inquiring occasionally into the uncertain grounds, and reflecting on the certain mischiefs of them, they have fallen at last into such utter contempt, as to make us wonder, how it was possible for them, ever to have obtained any credit.

But whatever be the uncertainty of antient history, there is one thing at least, which we may certainly learn from it; that human nature has always been the same; agitated by the same appetites and passions, and liable to the same excuses and abuses of them, in all ages and countries of the world; so that

our experience of what passes in the present age, will be the best comment on what is delivered to us concerning the past. To apply it then to the case before us: there is hardly a single fact, which I have charged upon the primitive times, but what we still see performed, in one or other of the Sects of Christians, of our own times. Among some we see *diseases cured; Devils cast out, and all the other miracles*, which are said to have been wrought in the primitive Church: among others, we see the boasted gifts of *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days; *pretended revelations, prophetic visions, and divine impressions*: now all these modern pretensions we readily ascribe to their true cause; to the artifices and craft of a few, playing upon the credulity, the superstition, and the enthusiasm of the many, for the sake of some private interest: when we read therefore, that the same things were performed by the antients, and for the same ends, of acquiring a superiority of credit, or wealth, or power, over their fellow creatures; how can we possibly hesitate, to impute them to the same cause, of fraud and imposture?

In a word; to submit our belief implicitly and indifferently, to the mere force of authority, in all cases, whether miraculous or natural, without any rule of discerning the credible from the incredible, might support indeed the faith, as it is called, but would certainly destroy the use of all history; by leading us into perpetual errors, and possessing our minds with invincible prejudices, and false notions both of men and things. But to distinguish between things, totally different from each other; between miracle and nature; the extraordinary acts of God, and the ordinary transactions of man; to suspend our belief of the one, while, on the same testimony, we grant it freely to the other; and to require a different degree of evidence for each, in proportion to the different degrees of their credibility;

is so far from hurting the credit of history, or of any thing else, which we ought to believe, that it is the onely way to purge history from it's dross, and render it beneficial to us; and by a right use of our reason and judgement, to raise our minds above the low prejudices, and childish superstitions of the credulous vulgar.

There cannot be a stronger proof of the stupid credulity and superstition of those primitive ages, into which we have been inquiring, and of the facility of imposing any fictions upon them, which their leaders thought fit to inculcate, than what is related by St. *Augustin*, from the report, as he says, of credible persons, "that at *Ephesus*, where St. *John*, the Apostle, lay buried, he was not believed to be dead, but to be sleeping onely in the grave, which he had provided for himself, till our Lord's second coming: in proof of which, they affirmed, that the earth, under which he lay, was seen to heave up and down perpetually, in conformity to the motion of his body, in the act of breathing." Which ridiculous conceit was grounded on those words spoken by our Lord of that Apostle, *if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* Whence the other Apostles inferred, *that St. John should not die.* [Jo. xxi. 23.] vid. *Augustin*, in loc. Oper. T. 3. p. 819, 820.

But we have another instance, in our own country, of a credulity not less extravagant, than what is just mentioned, in the case of a person believed to be possessed by the Devil; an account of which was printed and published with the following title. "The *Surey Demoniac*. Or an account of *Satan's* strange and dreadful Actings, in and about the body of *Richard Dugdale*, of *Surey* near *Whalley* in *Lancashire*. And how he was possessed by God's blessing on the Fastings and Prayers of divers Ministers and peo-

ple. The matter of fact attested by the oaths of several credible persons, before some of his Majesty's Justices of the peace in the said County. London 1697."—These dreadful actings of *Satan* continued above a year: during which, there was a desperate struggle between him, and nine Ministers of the Gospel, who had undertaken to cast him out; and for that purpose, successively relieved each other in their dayly combats with him: while *Satan*, as in the days of *Tertullian*, tried all his arts to baffle their attempts; insulting them with scoffs and railery; puzzling them sometimes, with Latin and Greek, and threatening them with the effects of his vengeance; till he was finally vanquished and put to flight by the persevering prayers and fastings of the said Ministers: the truth of which fact is more substantially attested, than any case of the same kind, in all the primitive ages. *Mons. de Fontenelle*, a writer justly celebrated for his admirable parts and learning, speaking of the origin and progress of these popular superfixions, says, "Give me but half a dozen persons, whom I can persuade, that it is not the sun, which makes our day light, and I should not despair of drawing whole nations to embrace the same belief. For how ridiculous soever the opinion be, let it be supported onely for a certain time, and the business is done; for when it once becomes antient, it is sufficiently proved."—Hist. des oracles. c. xi.

R E M A R K S
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the firſt FOUR CENTURIES.

With ſome occaſional Reflections on the ſaid Book.

P R E F A C E.

I Have lately met with a certain book, which, though written without any reference to Dr. *Middleton's Introductory Discourse*, and with a view quite opposite to it, is yet so particularly connected with the subject of it, and consequently, with the present debate, which is grounded upon it, that I have thought it necessary, on this occasion, to give the reader a short abstract of it, as a proper preface or introduction to the following remarks.

The purpose of it, as it is declared by the Title-page, is,
“ To give a true and comprehensive view of Christianity ; or to
“ set forth the complete duty of a Christian, in relation to faith,
“ practice, worship and rituals, without regard to any modern
“ Church, Sect or Party ; as it is taught in the holy Scrip-
“ tures, was delivered by the Apostles, and received by the uni-
“ versal Church of Christ during *the first four centuries*. The
“ whole laid down in two Catechisms ; the first, for the use
“ of Children ; the second, of more knowing Christians.”

Now when a controversy was actually on foot, concerning the principles and characters of the primitive Fathers ; and a question moved among Divines, whether they were the most favorable to the Popish or to the Protestant cause, nothing could come out more apposite to the purpose, or more effectual towards the decision of it, than a performance of this kind ; setting forth by a deduction of facts and instances, what were the genuin doctrines and practices of those antient Fathers, during *the four first centuries* of the Christian Church. This book therefore I would recommend to the attention of the
I reader :

reader: For this will inable him to judge, of the real merit of *the Introductory Discourse*, which has been attacked and decried by several writers, and especially by these two, with whom I am now engaged.

The Author of these Catechisms, appears to be a man of sense and learning; warmly persuaded of the truth and importance of what he delivers; and delivering it with much piety and gravity, and with more candor, than we commonly observe in writers of his zeal and principles. The plan also of Christianity, which he has proposed to us, seems to be a fair and just representation of the discipline of the primitive Church, or of such a part at least, as he thinks fit to recommend to the practice of the present age. And if we grant him his main principle, that *unwritten tradition*, as it is exemplified by the universal practice of the antient Fathers and Churches, is of *Apostolic Origin*, we must grant likewise, that all the rites and doctrines, which he has deduced from it, are the essential parts of the Christian religion, and of equal obligation with the Gospel itself. Yet on the whole, this learned, candid, and pious performance will be found, upon examination, to confirm every thing, that Dr. *Middleton* has any where said, concerning the danger of adopting the discipline of those primitive ages, as a pattern or rule of duty to Protestants.

His scheme in general is this: that true religion consists, in believing and practising every thing, which God has revealed to us, either *by his written word or unwritten tradition; both which are known to be God's word by the evidence of the Catholic Church* [1]. He declares tradition to be, *that sacred depositum of doctrine and practice which was delivered by Christ to the Apostles; by the Apostles,*

[1] P. 151.

to the first Bishops; and by them, to their successors and Priests, of the universal Church, from age to age. [1] That all points of doctrine and discipline, which were *antiently and universally received by Christians, without any known beginning, have always been looked upon, as Apostolic traditions: that this consentient practice of the Catholic Church, is the test, by which true traditions are distinguished from false* [2], that these traditions may be called *the common law of the Church*; and the decrees of Councils, *it's statute-law*: and that no Church can be rightly constituted, *which does not observe them, or has any laws contradictory to them* [3].

He defines the Church to be, *the Society of all the faithful, who profess to serve God, according to that true religion, which God himself taught, and which they received from their fore-fathers, and have faithfully preserved without alteration*: that the marks of the true Church are four; It is *one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*; preserving the doctrine of the Apostles, by a continued succession of Pastors, derived originally from them [4]. Which suc-

[1] 142.

[2] 152.

[3] P. 191, 192.

[4] 161, 162.

These are the same marks of the true Church, which the Papists have always alledged against the Protestants, as being found in their Church, and not in any Protestant Church. Thus in a short treatise on this very subject, published by an able Popish writer, in the beginning of Q. Elizabeth's reign, and when the settlement of religion was under the deliberation of the Parliament, the author concludes his argument in these words. "To be short, the Church of Protestants is not *One*, for lack of one head: not *Holy*, for lack of benefits: not *Catholic*, because it hath not indured at all times,

" places, and persons: not *Apostolic*, because they cannot shew their succession from the Apostle downward, nor can go upward lineally to the Apostles, which thing is plain. Therefore the Church called Papistical, having one head, the Pope, having benefits of God, by flourishing, and miracles, being spread at all times, in all places, through all persons, that is to say, for the most part, being able to shew their pedigree, even to the Apostles, without any interruption; that Church, I say, is the onely true Church, whereof we make mention in our Belief, saying, I believe the Holy Catholic Church." See *Strype's Annals of Q. Eliz.* Append. p. 36.

cession we know to have been *uninterrupted, from the time of the Apostles, down to the present* [1]: that if it should ever once fail, it would be impossible to renew it, without the miraculous interposition of Christ himself: for if the whole Christian world should unite their suffrages together, they could not give any authority, to offer the sacrifice of the Eucharist, or to perform any other part of the pastoral office in the Church, it being a power, which Christ has reserved to himself [2].

That this universal Church, as it is now militant on earth, is made up of all the particular faithful Churches; of each of which the Bishop is the visible head. *That a particular faithfull Church consists of a rightful Bishop, with his Clergy and laity united to him, professing the true faith, without the addition of false doctrine, and practising the necessary Christian worship, without corruption.* Hence flows the necessity of living and dying in the communion of the Church, out of which salvation is not ordinarily to be had. For we cannot be united to Christ, *without communicating with the holy Catholic Church, and the onely means of communicating with the Catholic Church, is, by being members of a particular faithfull Church* [3].

To this general view of his primary and fundamental principles, I shall now add a summary account of the chief articles of that pure and primitive Christianity, which he has built upon them.

To begin then with the sacraments. In the office of Baptism, he prescribes, as necessary to the due administration of it, all the same ceremonies, which are now actually practised by the *Romish* Church, tho' with some little alteration, or the addition rather of more foppery and superstition, than is to be found even in the Popish ritual. The person, to be baptised,

[1] P. 151.

[2] 282.

[3] P. 162.

must in the first place be *exorcised* by the Priest, by *blowing thrice upon his face, signing him with the sign of the Cross, and pronouncing a certain form of authoritative words, commanding the Devil to depart out of him.* He next makes a *solemn renunciation of the Devil; and a vow of perpetual obedience to Christ:* in which renunciation, *he must turn his face to the West, as being opposite to the region of light, and representing the Prince of darkness, whom he renounces:* but in making his vow to Christ, he must *turn again to the East, where Paradise was planted, which is now again laid open to him:* then he must be *anointed on the head and shoulders with holy oil, consecrated for that purpose by the Bishop, to inable, him, to wrestle the more successfully with the Devil:* then he is to be *plunged three times under water; once at the name of each person of the blessed Trinity; to represent the faith, into which he is baptised; and also the three days burial of Christ, and his resurrection on the third day;* with several other mystical senses, there specified: after this, he must be anointed again with *holy Chrism, or a compound of oil and balm, consecrated by the Bishop; and is to be cloathed with a white Garment, the emblem of that purity, to which he has devoted his life:* then he receives *the kiss of peace, in token of his incorporation into the Church:* and lastly is made to *tast of consecrated milk and honey, to denote his spiritual infancy, and his entrance into the land of rest, of which Canaan, the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, was a type* [1].

As to the Eucharist, the *true and full notion of it, he says, is this; that it is a religious feast upon bread, and wine mixed with water, which have first been offered in sacrifice to God, and are become the mysterious body and blood of Christ* [2]. He affirms it to

[1] P. 227, &c. 232.

[2] P. 240.

be, a *real and proper sacrifice*; and calls sacrifice in general, *the most perfect, efficacious, and honorable service*, that we can pay to God [1]; and the particular sacrifice of the Eucharist, *the most excellent worship*, which God ever prescribed to men [2]: which by its *purgative and expiatory nature* procures a general remission of *sin for the whole Church*, and atones likewise for the wilfull transgressions of particular sinners: of which sacrifice, Christ, at the time of the institution, *consecrated his Apostles to be the Priests*, with a power of consecrating others to succede them, and carry on the same Priesthood to the end of the world [3].

The sacramental part of the Eucharist, *is the Feast upon this sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ*; which being offered to God upon the Altar by the Priest, is consumed afterwards in common by the Priest and People by eating and drinking; for it was made too holy a thing by it's consecration, to be treated as the antient sacrifices were, or to be laid on the fire in whole or in part, but was to be consumed intirely, in the most honorable manner, that is, to be eaten and drunk by the faithful, in an act of most solemn devotion. He declares, that as Christ, by the words of the institution, made the bread and the cup to be his body and blood, in type and figure, so God, by his acceptance of this most excellent sacrifice, caused the Holy Spirit to give it the highest degree of sanctity, of which any sacrifice is capable, and to make it the very body and blood of Christ, in real power and energy, and to all intents and purposes of religion, or as far as it was possible for one thing to be made another, without changing the substance. And this he says, was the certain and universal belief of the Antients, that as the natural body of Christ was formed in the womb of the blessed Virgin, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, so, by the operation of the same Spirit, the bread and the cup were made

[1] 250.

[2] 240, 279.

[3] 267, 268, 270.

thisbody and blood in a more effectual manner, than as mere representatives [1].

He affirms also, that the contents of the Eucharistic cup, must necessarily be wine, *mixed with water*; and employs four intire chapters, to prove this mixture to be *of divine institution*; and that it was the universal doctrine of the Catholic Church, for above 1500 years, *that our Saviour practised, instituted and commanded the mixed cup; and made water therefore, as well as wine, an essential ingredient* [2]. Lastly, he largely and strongly insists on the duty and necessity of *Infant-communion*, or of bringing all infants, even of the tenderest age, to partake of this sacrifice: which he enforces by a similar practice both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and the parity of those arguments, which are alledged for *Infant-baptism*; and, above all, by the constant practice of the primitive Church through the three first centuries, which he deduces very particularly in several distinct chapters [3]. After the celebration of the Eucharist, he recommends the revival of the *Agape, or Love-feast* of the primitive Christians; which was a common entertainment, provided out of the voluntary oblations of the richer communicants, in order to feed the poorer: and was held, he says, *for above three centuries and an half, within the Church*; and tho' prohibited afterwards in Churches, continued still to be held in private houses; as an *usefull and laudable rite, and not onely of Apostolic origin, but of great service to the Christian Church* [4].

To these two sacraments of the Gospel, the Church of *Rome* has added *five*, but this Protestant Catechist, *ten*; which he calls *lesser Sacraments*. Five of them belonging to *Baptism*;

[1] P. 285, 296, 297.

[2] 315, &c.

[3] P. 367.

[4] 393, &c.

P R E F A C E.

Exorcism, anointing with oil, the white garment, a taste of milk and honey, and the unction by holy Chrism: the other five are, the sign of the Cross, Imposition of hands, the Unction of the sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony [1]. The three last of these are held also as sacraments by the *Romish* Church, together with *confirmation and penance*, but instead of *confirmation*, this writer introduces, *imposition of hands*, which they call the *outward sign of it*: and though he does not make a sacrament of *Penance*, yet he enjoins it, as a necessary duty to all Christians; with private confession also to a Priest, which the *Romanists* reckon, as the outward sign of it [2]. And in truth, all his *lesser sacraments*, are nothing else but so many *Popish* ceremonies, now actually practised by that Church; which, upon the authority of tradition and the primitive Fathers, he declares to be so essential, that *it is not in the power of the universal Church, to alter or lay them aside* [3]. And as to the *sign of the Cross*, tho' the *Romanists* make use of it in all their Sacraments, and prescribe it likewise in all the offices of private life, declaring it, as this author also does, to have wrought many miracles, yet *Popish* superstition never reached so far, as to advance it to a Sacrament.

As to the other parts of our worship due to God, he prescribes a constant attendance on the public and daily service of the Church, *every morning and evening, and on the penitential offices, peculiar to Wednesdays and Fridays*; which appear, he says, *from Tradition, to have been days appointed for divine worship by the Apostles, as well as Sundays*. And besides these stated times, he requires us to attend also devoutly, *on the public prayers of the Church at Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination; at Matrimony, the Churching of women, and burial of the dead; at the consecration*

[1] P. 224.

[2] 410, &c.

[3] P. 195.

of oil, the milk, the honey and the Chrism ; and at all the other benedictions, and Ecclesiastical prayers, which are said over different persons and things on different occasions : because all these Offices were composed by great saints, out of the words of scripture, and preserved by ancient tradition, and designed to sanctify all our actions, and use of all the creatures.

As to our private devotions and prayers, besides the morning and night, he prescribes a repetition of them, *every third hour of the day ; at nine in the forenoon, twelve at noon, and three in the afternoon ;* as being the fixed times of performing them, *during the three first centuries :* and he recommends it to those zealous Christians of *heroic piety, who would imitate holy David, Paul and Silas,* to extend their devotions also to *the third hour of the night :* according to which division of the day and night into equal spaces of three hours each, all the returning times of prayer have acquired the following Latin names in the Romish Church ; *Prime or Matins, in the morning : Tierce, at nine, or the third hour : Sexte, at noon, or the sixth hour : None, at three, or the ninth hour : Vespers, at six, in the evening : Compline, at nine at night : Nocturns, at midnight : and Lauds, at three in the morning, or the time of Cock-crowing.* To which *Heroic* pitch of devotion, as he calls it, no Christians of these later days have had the presumption to aspire, or the honor to reach, except some Monkish orders of the Popish Church, or a few wild Enthusiasts, or crafty zealots, heroically ambitious of the honor of a Saintship. But to give some ease however under so laborious a devotion, to Christians especially engaged in business, he observes, that, if they frequent the public offices of the Church, *their devotions at these hours may be very short ;* and proposes to them *the sign of the Cross, made with this form of words, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Ghost. Amen: As the shortest and most significant of all prayers: because we confess by it, *the mystery of the Trinity*; and, by the motion of our hand, *expresses the figure of the Cross, or the mystery of our redemption, with that also of the incarnation, on which it depends* [1]. Lastly, in the act of praying, whether public or private, he directs us, to turn our faces *towards the East, according to antient tradition*, and adds several reasons, which were alleged for it by the Primitive Fathers [2].

He affirms likewise, upon the same authority, the duty of *praying for the faithful deceased*: that *as the Saints in Paradise pray for us, so we ought to pray for all those, who departed in the faith, but cannot attain the completion of their happiness, 'till the final day of judgement*. That we should pray even *for the forgiveness of their sins*: for their present separate state being the consequence and punishment of Sin, and a state of imperfection, in which the soul is capable of improvement, it follows, *that prayers and alms and Eucharistic sacrifices offered for them in the Church, may increase the blessedness of their intermediate state, and prevail for the abatement of those rigors, which they might otherwise suffer in the conflagration of the last day* [3].

All these sacramental rites and offices of devotion, which I have hitherto recited, are deduced by him from what he calls, *the common law of the Church*; that is, the practice and custom of primitive Antiquity: but he has collected also from it's *Statute-law*, or the decrees of Councils, *six particular Commands of the Church*, as he calls them, which he enjoins to all Christians, as of equal obligation.

The first command is, *to abstain from eating blood*. Which he declares to have been observed *by the holy Church throughout the*

[1] P. 175.

[2] 176.

[3] P. 164.

world, even to the tenth century; and that it is laid upon all Christians, by the law of God, and the tradition and Canons of the primitive Church, to eat of no animal, but what is so killed, that the blood of it may be naturally poured out [1].

The second is, *to offer to God our tithes, first fruits, and voluntary oblations.* This he calls *a necessary branch of divine worship*, and declares, that God had appropriated to himself *our tithes*, or the tenth part of our substance, *from the beginning of the world: and that the oblation of our first fruits is commanded also by the Holy Ghost*, and in all religions, ages, and countries of the world, was ever esteemed a part of divine worship. But besides *our tithes and first fruits*, which are due by the divine law, God expects from us also *voluntary oblations*; in the measure of which however he leaves us at our liberty; *yet the more we offer, the more acceptably we serve him.* These are to be paid to his servants and receivers, the Priests; tho' not for their own use, but to be deposited in the hands of the Bishop, *as a standing treasury, for the support of the Church, the maintenance of the Clergy, and the relief of the poor, of which the Bishop is to have the disposal, as being Christ's vicar, the prime steward of God's revenues, and the chief master of his household [2].*

The third is, *to observe the Festivals of the Church.* These are divided into the greater and lesser. The greater are, *Easter-day, the first Sunday after Easter, Ascension-day, Whit-sunday, all the Sundays of the year and Christmas-day [3].* The lesser are, *all the days between Easter and Whit-sunday, except Sundays: in which we solemnize our Saviour's resurrection for fifty days successively, during which time all fasts are suspended, and we are to pray standing, as on all Sundays, in token of joy, and thereby make every one of these days equal in a manner to Sundays.* All Saturdays or Sabbaths likewise, except that before Easter, are lesser Feasts, having been sanctified

[1] P. 204.

[2] 205.

[3] 208.

by God from the creation of the world, and in memory of that, continued to be observed by the primitive Christians, *as Festivals of devotion. Monday also and Tuesday after Whitsunday, the Circumcision, Epiphany, the Purification and Annuntiation of the blessed Virgin, and all the other Saints days, marked in our present Calendars, are in the number of his lesser Festivals* [1].

The fourth is, *to observe the Fasts of the Church*: which are divided also into the greater and lesser. The greater are *holy Saturday, or the day before Easter*; which the Primitive Christians kept with *a vigil and Persecution*, in memory of our Lord's resurrection, which happened early the next morning; about which time they expected also his second coming. The next Fast in strictness is *Good Friday*, the preceding day; on which our Lord was crucified. But the primitive Church joined them both together, *as one Fast of forty hours, and kept it as an Evangelic command.* The other greater Fasts are the *other four preceding days of the same week before Easter*, as preparatory to the more strict and solemn observance of *Good Friday and Holy Saturday.* The lesser Feasts are, *the Stations, and Lent.* The *Stations* are, *all the Wednesdays and Fridays of the Year*; being weekly commemorations, *of our Lord's being sold by Judas on Wednesday, and crucified on Friday*; and are called *Stations*, in allusion to *military stations and keeping guard.* The use of these Fasts is, *to punish ourselves for our sins, by suffering hunger and thirst, depriving ourselves of our pleasures, and even of a part of our necessary nourishment. For by mortifying of the flesh and weakening the body, we mortify the mind, and dispose it the better for prayer, compunction, and serious thoughts* [2].

The fifth is, *to offer and receive the Eucharist, on every holy day; at least, on all the greater Festivals*: which relaxation the Church.

[1] P. 209.

[2] 210..

P R E F A C E.

inquired, he says, *that she might secure a weekly celebration of it on all Sundays, besides the Ascension and Christmas-days: which is the least, that is required of all Christians, both by scripture and tradition: and those, who willfully omit it on the Lord's day, do virtually excommunicate themselves for a time* [1].

The sixth command of the Church is *to pray standing on all Sundays, and on every day, between Easter and Whit-sunday*, out of respect and remembrance of our Lord's resurrection, which was observed by all Churches, from the beginning, on the authority of *Apostolic tradition*, and especially enforced, *by the 20th Canon of the first great Council of Nice. A. D. 325.* the posture of kneeling is adapted onely to occasions of humiliation and penitential devotion, but that of standing, he says, *is a beautifull symbolic representation of our Lord's resurrection*; proper to raise our thoughts from the earth, and to unite them more closely with God, and the things above: and no ceremony of the Church can be more efficacious for the purpose of elevating the mind, and inflaming the affections, and stirring up the faculties of the soul [2].

As to the honors which were paid to *the Martyrs* by the Primitive Churches, he informs us, “ that their *reliques or the remains of their bodies* were carefully preserved and embalmed
“ and wrapped up in rich cloaths, and the very drops of their
“ blood gathered up. That, on the days of their Martyrdoms,
“ the Christians used to meet together, to celebrate their me-
“ mories and honor their nativity, as they called it, or their
“ entrance into eternal life: that they made these days Festivals,
“ like Sundays, and assembled at their Tombs, to thank God
“ for their example, and to excite one another to imitate it,
“ by reading their acts, and the history of their sufferings: and

[1] P. 217.

[2] 219.

“ that God worked miracles at their Tombs, and often at their
 “ Martyrdoms, by which several persons present and even their
 “ executioners and Judges had sometimes been converted [1].”

His account likewise of the origin of Monkeny, in the primitive ages, is this, “ that from the beginnings of Christianity,
 “ there were certain persons in the Church, called *Ascetics*, who,
 “ from a desire of attaining to a greater perfection, than that
 “ of common Christians, professed to exercise themselves in
 “ great austerities, after the example of *John Baptist*. These
 “ exercises were, to abstain wholly from flesh and wine; to
 “ fast for two or three days successively; to spend their time
 “ chiefly in devotion; to give up themselves and their substance
 “ to the service of God and the use of the poor and distressed,
 “ confining themselves to a single life, and making themselves
 “ Eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven, inuring themselves to
 “ great hardships, watchings, sleeping on the ground, for
 “ the promotion, of piety and religion: all which severities
 “ were voluntary, and exercised without any compulsive rules.

“ But about the middle of the third century, in a time of
 “ persecution, great numbers, to avoid the fury of it, fled in-
 “ to the deserts of *Ægypt*, where they employed themselves in
 “ acts of piety. and divine contemplations; and found that
 “ sort of life so agreeable, that when the persecution ceased,
 “ they chose to continue still in that solitary state, whence they
 “ came to be called *Monks*. They lived at first in little cells or
 “ cottages, which they built for themselves: but towards the
 “ middle of the fourth century they were brought to live in communi-
 “ ties, and under rules by *St. Pachomius*; who procured Monaste-
 “ ries to be built for them about *Thebais*: and many holy per-
 “ sons, who were desirous to keep up the exact practice of the

[1] P. 146.

“ Christian religion, which they saw declining, chose this kind
 “ of life. They spent their time in manual labor, and in me-
 “ ditating on the holy scripture; fasted every day 'till towards
 “ the evening, and then seldom tasted any thing more, than
 “ bread and water: they assembled together to pray at the
 “ evening and in the night; slept little, kept a profound si-
 “ lence, practised all sorts of virtues, and lived in perfect obe-
 “ dience to their superiors, though there were sometimes *seve-*
 “ *ral thousands of them* under one Governor, for in a short time
 “ they multiplied exceedingly [1].

“ From the same beginnings and in the same manner, were
 “ formed also the primitive societies of *religious virgins or nuns*;
 “ who practised the same austerities, of *silence, poverty, watch-*
 “ *ings, and continual prayer*: and there were several saints,
 “ who drew up rules for the Monastic life of both the sexes;
 “ which soon spread through all Christendom; for *St. Martin*
 “ *of Tours* brought it into *France in the fourth century*; and *Pe-*
 “ *lagius* is supposed to have brought it into *England, about the*
 “ *beginning of the fifth* [2].”

From this short sketch of the Christian duties, deduced at large by this author, from the united authority of *Scripture and tradition*, the reader will easily perceive, what would be the consequence, of admitting them, as a *rule of faith and practice to Protestants*.

For in the first place; the necessity of a Priesthood, derived by a lineal descent from the Apostles, if acknowledged by all Christians, as it is affirmed by this writer, would create incurable disorders in all Protestant communities. According to this principle, if the Priesthood should once fail, the whole Christian worship would be dissolved at once, without the possibi-

[1] P. 147.

[2] 149.

lity of a renewal, but by a new commission or revelation from heaven. Now *this uninterrupted succession of Priests* is allowed to ~~the~~ Church of *Rome*, but denied by many to the Church of *England*, and not so much as pretended to, by any other Church or Sect of Protestants whatsoever: among whom consequently, neither the Christian Sacraments, nor any part of the pastoral office can be administered, without a sacrilegious profanation, and impious defiance of Christ himself. How forcibly then would any scruples of this kind operate on weak and religious minds, towards driving them into the arms of that Church, in which alone, they could be sure of receiving the absolution of their sin, from the hands of an Apostolic Confessor.

Secondly, From this plan of primitive Christianity we may observe, how tradition, instead of serving to that use, which is more peculiarly ascribed to it, of adding light and illustration to the obscurer parts of the gospel, serves onely to perplex and obscure it the more, by multiplying quæstions, ingrafting new doctrines upon it, clogging it with tiresome ceremonies, and converting it from a rational, to a ritual, service. The article of *the Eucharist* will confirm this reflection. Our Lord's institution of it, as it is related by all the Evangelists, is comprized in a few words, in which he prescribes *a solemn and religious commemoration of his death and sufferings*, to be perpetually observed in his Church: the frequent celebration of which, by a natural tendency and effect, could not fail to excite, in all his faithfull disciples, a warm affection and zeal for the memory of their Master, and confirm their resolutions of living conformably to his precepts. But tradition is no sooner called in, to the interpretation of it, than it envelopes it presently in clouds of mystic darkness; transforms it into *a proper and propitiatory sacrifice, offered for the dead, as well as the living*;

being : declares the materials of it, the bread and wine, as soon as consecrated by the Priest, to be no longer mere representatives, or types of Christ's body and blood, but converted by the operation of the holy Spirit, into the same thing with Christ himself, in power and energy, and to all intents and purposes of religion, tho' in mystery, not in substance. It mingles the Eucharist cup also, with *wine and water*, tho' by the words of the institution, it appears to have had nothing in it but wine, and affirms *this mixture to be of divine appointment*, tho' there be not the least mention of it in any part of the Gospel. And, to make this sacred office still more burthenfome, it enjoins to us, as a necessary duty, to bring all infants, even of the tenderest age, to partake of it; a practice, which must needs disturb the solemnity of it, and dissipate the attention, of all who assist at it. And declares this Sacrament, not onely to be *necessary to salvation*; but *a means, by which a principle of an happy resurrection is conveyed into our bodies* [1].

Thus the *true and full notion*, as he calls it, of *the Eucharist*, delivered originally by our Lord, within the compass of two or three verses, when dressed out in all the trimmings, with which tradition has equipped it, takes up *an hundred and fifty pages, or about eighty intire chapters of this Author's larger Catechism*. He apologizes indeed for his prolixity on this article, on the account of its importance, and *the many controversies, which have arisen about it in the Christian Church; and because the whole of our religion may fairly be summed up in it* [2]: for there is no other article, he says, *which requires more pains and study to be rightly informed in, and that to believe it is indeed a work of labor* [3]. But this very apology for the length of his doctrine, seems to be a confutation of the truth of it. For it is

[1] P. 287. [2] P. 393. [3] 311.

certain, that an institution, which cannot be explained without so much learned pains, could never be designed for the most excellent part of a worship, which was calculated for the common salvation of all men; or that tradition at least cannot be the proper interpreter of it, which makes it so difficult to be understood, that it is *a labor to believe it*.

Thirdly, We may observe also, from this same book, what is notorious likewise in the Romish Church, that tradition, wherever it is admitted into a partnership of authority with the Scriptures, instead of serving as it's handmaid, as some of our Divines affect to call it, has always acted the Mistress, taken the lead, and got the ascendant so far, as to eclipse the credit of the written word, reduce it as it were to a dead letter, and even banish it at last from the use of the people. Thus in *the primitive Catechism* now before us, among all the various rites and doctrines, laid down as essential to Christians, for every single one, derived immediately from the Gospel, we may reckon twenty, I dare say, deduced intirely from tradition.

Fourthly, We may now see, from a clear deduction of facts and instances, as they are set forth in this piece, how directly the authority of the primitive Fathers and their traditions tends to lead us into the Church of *Rome*: we see it ascribing a supreme and independent power to the Church; asserting the Popish sacraments; a propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, both for the living and the dead; prayers for the dead, to procure some relief and improvement of their intermediate state; Exorcisms, Chrisms, consecrated oil, sign of the Cross, penances, confessions to a Priest, absolutions, reliques of Saints; Monks; the preference of a single life, to the married. as of gold to silver; in short almost every thing, now practise or professed by the Romanists;

except

except *the universal supremacy* of the Pope, which is disputed by the Papists themselves; *the divine worship of Saints*, which they also disavow and endeavour to elude; and absolute transubstantiation; towards which however he has gone as far, as he could possibly do, while he retains the name of a Protestant: but tho' that character obliged him, to keep as clear of Popery, as he was able, yet tradition, we see, has carried him to the very confines, and prepared him as it were to step into it, whenever a proper occasion should invite. For I could never consider these plans of primitive Christianity, when published by Protestants, in any other light, than as preliminary articles, offered to the Romish Church, as the ground for a treaty of peace and reconciliation, in which the few remaining points of difference might easily be accommodated. Which vain project of an union with *Rome*, has ever been the fond wish of all those zealots of our Church, who draw their religious principles from the source of primitive Antiquity.

I am a perfect stranger to the author of this piece, nor have any other knowledge of his character, than what has been signified to me by his writings, and the report of common fame. The warm expressions of piety and devotion, which run through his whole performance, oblige me to think him an honest man; as I take every one to be, who governs himself by a virtuous principle, or believes, that he does so, tho' he be deceived in the choice, or the application of that principle. Fame also has informed me, that he lives up to the character, which his book points out to us: practises what he professes; and is an example of that discipline, which he prescribes to others: that he is a Protestant Priest; yet a separatist from the communion of our Protestant Church; disaffected to it's present constitution, and consequently to the present govern-

ment, on which it's security depends. This is the real character which his writings suggest: this, the natural course of his principles, when frankly avowed, and pushed to their full length. Principles, which, among Protestants, will ever produce the worst fruit, when they take root in the best minds; will corrupt the purest heart; make even the sincerity of men dangerous to society, and transform a pious, zealous Christian, into an enemy to his country.

Yet these are the principles, which the *Chapmans*, the *Berrimans*, the *Stebbings* are so zealously asserting and recommending to this Protestant Kingdom. Dr. *Chapman*, as we shall see in the following Remarks, when driven by unanswerable testimonies, to give up the character of any antient Father, as favorable to the Popish cause, takes refuge in *the collective body of them, and the consentient practice of the primitive Churches*, as the proper *armoury*, or bulwark of Protestantism: on which same foundation, this Catechism, which I have been considering, is professedly grounded. From this therefore every one may now learn, what a sort of Protestantism it is, which the authority of those antients, and the zeal of these moderns would finally impose upon us: A Protestantism compounded of *fanatical Enthusiasm, and Popish Superstition*; giving itself up to an implicit submission to Church authority; banishing every thing rational out of it's doctrine and discipline; placing the principal service of God, in ritual observances, and Monkish devotions; and obliged to adopt, as *divine or Apostolic*, every whim and absurdity, which, through the credulity, bigotry, policy, or private interests of any leading Churchmen, had insinuated itself into the Christian worship, within the compass of the first four hundred years.

R · E M A R K S

O N

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

U P O N my first and hasty perusal of these *Anonymous Observations*, I could not help considering them as the work of some sly unbeliever, who under the mask of zeal for the honour of the Gospel, and a pretence of fears and jealousies, from the freedom of *the Introductory Discourse*, was craftily pointing out every topic and passage of it, which, by any art or force, could be strained to the advantage of the Infidel cause.

He begins early, to drop his suspicions, *that something bad lay at the bottom, which had excited the Author to this undertaking*; [1] and as he advances forward, takes occasion to declare, *that the Author must either renounce his argument or the Gospel*; [2] *that those, who believe the Fathers of the second and third Centuries to be more credulous, than those of the fourth, may fancy the Apostles to have been more credulous than them all*. [3] *That if the world was so credulous, immediately after the Apostles, it will not be easy to comprehend, how it should have been much less so, in the Apostles times*; [4] *that the Author's charge indeed stops with the Fathers, but that his arguments do not stop there*; [5] *for if the Fathers can*

[1] Observat. p. 5. [2] p. 18. [3] p. 18. [4] 23. [5] 24.

be proved to have been forgers of lies, the consequences may go a great way [f].

When I saw therefore an unknown writer, entering forwardly into a debate, to which he appeared to be an utter stranger; and treating the chief point of it, as a problem, which might possibly be true, yet representing it all the while, as ruinous to Christianity, what else could I so naturally think of him, as that he was some Infidel in disguise, who was catching all opportunities of prompting the enemies of revelation, to lay hold on every thing, which could furnish matter of cavil or ridicule to the disadvantage of the Christian religion: for with whatever view he wrote, it is certain, that the obvious tendency of his performance is, to confirm people in Scepticism, and to suggest arguments for the defence of it.

I have since indeed been informed, that he is of a character very different, from what I at first imagined; celebrated for his *polemic* writings, and eminently distinguished by his zeal and orthodox principles: and upon a stricter review of his work, I can discover many strokes, which seem to indicate a genius of that sort; an eagerness to appear the first in the dispute, though he has nothing to offer in it, but the testimony of his zeal; the art of playing an hypothesis against fact, and of eluding by a distinction, what he cannot oppose by reasoning. Yet it puzzles me still, to consider, how such a veteran in controversy, and master of the *polemic* arts, can be so jejune and futile in the matter, and so injudicious and inconsistent in the management of his argument.

The professed design of his *Observations*, as it is signified in the very Title page, is, *to remove the prejudices of the Author of the Introductory Discourse*. But in a Discourse of that nature,

formed in contradiction to opinions universally established, and religiously believed, to warn people *against the Author's prejudices*, and to attempt seriously to remove them, is in itself absurd and ridiculous. For in the present case, on which side can the weight of prejudices be supposed to lie? surely, the belief of nations, the testimony of ages; and the authority of fifteen Centuries, are the strongest prejudices, which can possibly be conceived, in favor of any controverted facts; and no contradiction can be offered to them, but under all the disadvantage and inequality, which any influence of that sort can create. If our Observator therefore had really desired, to have this question fairly examined, it should have been his first care, to remove these capital prejudices out of the way, or at least, to moderate the force of them, by informing his readers, that if the practice and example of past ages, of what duration soever, had been thought of weight enough to over-rule all other evidence; no improvement of science, or reformation in religion, nor even Christianity itself could ever have made it's way into the world: but instead of this, the whole purpose of his book is, not to remove, but to strengthen old prejudices, and inculcate new ones in every page, against the design, the subject, and the whole composition of *the Introductory Discourse*.

He declares it to be a work, *of no use or significancy to us, either as Christians or Protestants*; [1] that it *advances nothing toward: the general conclusion, which it aims at, but leaves the question just as it found it*; [2] that it *quarrels with the whole stream of Christian writers, and that a candid man would not have offered such a charge to the public, without producing his evidence at the same time*; [3] that *the Fathers are in possession, and have a right to keep it, till their title be disproved* [4]. All which declarations

[1] p. 5, 25. [2] p. 24. [3] p. 6. [4] p. 25.

are so many contradictions to his pretence of removing prejudices. For it is not possible, that a *Discourse of no significancy, advancing nothing, but leaving things just as it found them*, should be capable of infusing any thing prejudicial to any cause whatsoever. Yet what is still more remarkable, he affirms *the twelve last pages of it to be nothing else, but one thorough impertinency, from the beginning to the end* [1]. This indeed is the true old way of removing prejudices, by removing whole treatises at once; and shews, what our Observator would be at; the salutary method, now practised so successfully abroad, of an *Index expurgatorius*, or what was used also formerly with equal success, at home, an *Imprimatur* by the Chaplains of our Bishops.

But what is it after all, which makes those pages so completely impertinent and offensive to him? Why, they contain *an harangue*, he says, *on the Scriptures being the rule of faith; and a charge upon the present Clergy, of carrying the credit of Ecclesiastic Antiquity to an height, which tends to throw us again into the hands of the Romish Church*. Yet if such an harangue be true, it can never be impertinent, in a Protestant country; especially at a time, when Popery is allowed to be gaining ground upon us. And as to *the charge*, as he calls it, upon *the present Clergy*, as if it included the whole body of them, it is the exaggeration onely of a polemic writer: for though Dr. M——, the Author of that Discourse, charges the Clergy in general, with paying a greater deference to the Authority of the Fathers, than is due, and much more, than is paid to it by any other protestant Church; yet in the passage here referred to, where he is speaking of principles, *now carried to a length, which must needs alarm all serious Protestants*, he cannot be understood to be charging any other part, or persons of the Clergy, but those

[1] p. 29. See note.

particular Defenders of the primitive Monks and their miracles, whose names he often mentions, and whose principles he particularly exposes, through that whole Discourse, as dangerous to the Protestant cause: which charge he will always be ready to make good, against all, who assert, and all, who encourage and reward the Assertors of such principles.

The argument of the Introductory Discourse is formed upon a supposition of *the truth of the miracles of Christ and the Apostles*, as they stand recorded in the New Testament, and sets forth the proper distinction between them, and the miracles of the succeeding ages, in order to shew, that whatever be the success of that work, the credit of the Gospel cannot be affected by it. In this our Observator perfectly agrees with Dr. M——n, and expressly declares, in different parts of his book, *that, if not so much as one true miracle could be found after the days of the Apostles, the foundations of Christianity would be equally secure* [1]. Yet notwithstanding these declarations, we find him perpetually insinuating, that the very attempt to prove, what when actually proved, he affirms, to be of no significancy, is dangerous to the Authority of the Gospel, and sufficient to alarm all good Christians with the apprehension of its consequences.

In the same manner, all the other Advocates of the primitive miracles, in the midst of their zeal to assert their authority, take care to distinguish the Apostolic miracles, as established on much clearer evidence and a firmer foundation. Thus *Dr. Berriman*, speaking of a particular miracle of the fifth Century, affirms, *that it cannot be discredited, without rejecting all accounts of miracles, except those of the Scriptures*: [2] intimating by that exception, that the Scriptural miracles would stand, though all the rest were overthrown. Yet no sooner

[1] p. 30.

[2] See Sermon at Lady Moyers's lecture, p. 327.

does Dr. M—— attempt to overthrow them, than we hear these very men crying out with one voice, that *he is overthrowing Christianity itself, and whatever his intention may be, that he will carry us of course, either into Popery or Scepticism.* [1] Hence we may observe, how easily spleen and prejudice can over-rule the reason and even conviction of these writers, and how the zeal, which they so warmly express in the present case, cannot be a zeal for the Gospel, which they declare to be unconcerned in it, but for some particular opinions and systems, which have been engrafted upon it at different times, for the more commodious support of the interests, or ease of the leading Churchmen.

Again, it is affirmed in the *Introductory Discourse*, “that the
“miracles of the fourth Century were universally the effects of
“*fraud and imposture*; which yet all the principal Fathers of
“that age, partly through weak credulity, and partly through
“reasons of policy, made it their business, to propagate, in
“favor of certain rites and doctrines, which they were desirous
“to establish: that considering the characters of those Fathers,
“it was reasonable to think, that they either forged those
“miracles themselves, or knew them to be forged by others;
“or, if that should not be granted, it was certain at least, that
“they were so far deluded by other people’s forgeries, as to
“take them for real miracles: and let the Advocates of those
“Fathers chuse which of these alternatives they pleased, it
“would have the same force towards evincing Dr. M——’s
general conclusion,” *that we have no sufficient ground to believe upon their authority, that any miraculous powers were subsisting in the Church in that age.*

This state of the case is clear and consistent. Let us see then, how the Observer has contrived to perplex it. In the 1st

[1] See Def. of Dr. C——’s Charge, p. 46.

place, he is angry with Dr. M—, for charging those miracles to *fraud and imposture*, when it was *as easy to ascribe them to superstition and credulity: is every man a knave or cheat*, says he, *who believes, that there is virtue in an amulet or charm?* [2] By this easy way of putting the question, one would imagine the dispute to have turned onely, on the primitive method of *curing the cramp, or the tooth-ach*. But when positive testimonies have been produced from the most venerable of the Fathers, declaring, that *the dead had been raised to life, and the blind restored to sight, by touching the reliques of some reputed Saint, or by sending their clothes onely to be touched by them; will the virtue of an amulet* be sufficient to account for the reality of such facts, or the belief of that virtue, to justify the integrity of such witnesses? but on this article he asks, *how Dr. M— comes to know, that the Fathers did not believe the miracles, which they themselves have recorded?* [2] The answer is obvious, that the nature of the things attested, and the characters of the persons attesting must convince every reasonable man, that they could not believe them. And here it is curious to observe, how the state of the controversy is of a sudden reversed: for the Observer, whose chief quarrel with Dr. M— is, for his injurious opinion and treatment of the antient Fathers, now takes the opposite side, and quarrels with him, for thinking more highly of them, than he himself does. Dr. M—— conceives so good an opinion of their understanding, as to think it impossible, that they should not discover the palpable forgery of the absurd stories, which they relate; whereas the Observer takes them, to have been so grossly ignorant and credulous, that they might probably believe them.

[1] Observat. p. 13.

[2] p. 14.

Since he is so fond then of this hypothesis of their *credulity*, and thinks it, the onely way of saving the more valuable character of their integrity, it will be proper to consider the nature and extent of it a little more precisely, by applying it to a particular fact or two, on which it is supposed to have been exercised: which I shall extract again from *St. Jerom*, as being of all the Antients, the most generally esteemed for his learning and judgement by the Divines of these days.

This Father, in his life of *St. Hilarion the Monk*, among many other monstrous stories, relates; “ how that holy man
“ happening to travel into *Dalmatia*, was there presently in-
“ formed, that a terrible Dragon was laying waste the whole
“ province, of so enormous a size and strength, that he could
“ suck up into his mouth, by the force of his breath, whole
“ oxen and sheep, together with the herdsmen and shepherds,
“ and swallow them down at once. *Hilarion* therefore, being
“ implored by the inhabitants of the country, to deliver them
“ from this monster, ordered a pile of wood to be prepared,
“ and having put up his prayers to Christ, called out the Dra-
“ gon and commanded it to ascend the pile, which being done
“ accordingly, he set fire to the wood, and so the beast was
“ burnt alive, in the sight of all the people [1].

The same Father, in his Life also of an Hermit, named *Paul*, tells this story, “ that when *St. Antony*, another Hermit, was
“ travelling through the deserts of *Egypt*, to seek out *Paul*,
“ whom he was ordered to visit by a divine revelation, he met
“ with a *Centaur* upon the road, and being amazed at the fi-
“ gure of so strange a creature, and having armed himself with
“ the sign of the Cross, he demanded of the beast, in what part
“ of the desert, the Servant of God resided: to which the Cen-

[1] Hierou. Op. Tom. 4. par. 2. p. 87.

“ *taur* made some answer in a strange and horrible tone of voice,
 “ and with gestures of great civility, pointed out the way to
 “ him at the same time, by stretching out his right hand, and
 “ then ran swiftly away.” Upon which, *Jerom* leaves it as
 a problem, to the consideration of the reader, *Whether the*
Devil assumed that shape, to affright the holy man, or the Deserts,
fruitfull of monsters, produced that species also of animals. But be
 that as it will, “ *Antony* had not gone many steps farther, won-
 “ dering within himself, at what he had just seen, before he
 “ espied a *Satyr* approaching towards him, or a little man,
 “ with Goat’s feet, a crooked nose, and a forehead armed with
 “ horns, who, in token of peace, offered him the fruit of
 “ the palm tree, and being asked presently by *Antony*, what
 “ he was, gave this answer; I am a mortal, and one of those
 “ inhabitants of the Desert, whom the deluded Gentiles wor-
 “ ship, under the names of *Fauns*, *Satyrs* and *Incubi*, and am
 “ now deputed, as an Embassador from our whole tribe,
 “ to beg your prayers and intercession for us. To our
 “ common Lord and master, whom we know, to have been
 “ sent for the salvation of the whole world” — to which
 story *Jerom* adds this remark; “ that no man need to be scrupu-
 “ lous about the truth of it, because it was confirmed to the whole
 “ world, in the time of *Constantin*, when a little man, of the
 “ same species, was brought alive to *Alexandria*, and afforded
 “ a remarkable spectacle to the whole people [1].”

Now it is allowed by all, that *St. Jerom* was a man of great
 parts and knowledge: *Dr. Chapman* declares, that he understood
 the nature of piety and superstition, as well as any man living: and
 were he now alive, would soon do justice to himself and his brethren by
 his pen, and lash his revilers into a little more gravity and civility [2].

[1] Ibid. p. 70. 71. [2] See *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 182. and *Def. of his Charge*, p. 38.

If then, notwithstanding the authority of so great a man, Dr. M— finds himself convinced from the very nature of these stories, that they are all utterly fabulous, he must be thought to judge reasonably: in believing, that *St. Jerom*, (the superiority of whose judgement and learning he freely acknowledges) could not fail of being convinced of it too. But if our Observator has any scruples still on this head, and will insist, that *Jerom* might actually believe them; I am content to debate the matter with him on his own terms, and refer the whole quæstion to this single issue; *whether men so grossly credulous and superstitious can be authentic witnesses of miracles, which tend to confirm their particular interests, or prejudices, or favorite opinions?*

In the mean while, I find it necessary, to take notice of a distinction or two, of which he makes great use, and in which his chief strength lies; for unless we can clear ourselves of these, we may spare the pains of disputing with him, since by their help, he can evade the conclusion, though he allows all the premises. For example, it is affirmed in *the Introductory Discourse*, that the Fathers themselves, when they are disposed to speak truth, have not scrupled to confess, that miracles were actually ceased in the fourth Century, because the Church stood no longer in need of them [1]. The Observator himself allows, that there are many such passages in those Fathers [2]. Yet the same Fathers, on other occasions, confidently affirm, and sometimes, from their own knowledge, that perpetual miracles were still wrought in the same age, by *reliques, sacred oil, holy water, the sign of the Cross, and the sacramental bread*. Now from passages, so seemingly opposite and contradictory, a plain man would naturally conclude, that those Fathers were inconsistent with themselves, and telling us consequently what was false, either on the one side, or the other.

[1] See Disc. p. 36.

[2] Observ. p. 9. See note.

But such an imagination must not be entertained, it seems, of persons so holy and venerable; who were *too good*, as Dr. Chapman declares, *to offer at any quirks or illusions* [1]: of which, this observator will presently convince us, and solve the difficulty. For having discovered, that the miracles, which are recorded by *St. Austin*, are all said to have been wrought, not *by the ministry of living men, extraordinarily appointed, as in the Apostles days, but either by the Sacraments, or by prayer, or the memories of the Martyrs*, he makes this reflection upon it, that “ if the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* would have understood those passages of the Fathers, as they ought to be understood, with this distinction, he would have spared his unmannerly reflection. Because it might be true, *that miracles were then wrought by the Sacraments, though it was not true, that any were then wrought by the ministry of living men, as in the days of the Apostles* [2].

These polemic writers, if they can serve a present turn, and get rid of some incidental difficulty in a debate, by any quibble of this sort, seldom look forward, or consider, what effect it may have on the main question, or on Christianity itself. The present distinction serves to clear the Fathers from the charge of inconsistency; and so far it will be applauded by all the admirers of primitive antiquity; but it has not yet done half its work; for unless the reason, assigned by those Fathers, for *the cessation of miracles*, can be distinguished also away, they must be understood to be speaking of an *universal cessation*, because, *the Church*, as they tell us, *stood no longer in need of them*. But here indeed, our Observator's distinction will do most notable service: for though the religion of the Gospel, after it had gained an establishment in the world, stood no longer in need of miracles, wrought *by the ministry of living men*, as in the days of the Apo-

[1] Miscel. Tracts, p. 26.

[2] Observ. p. 9. note.

ties, which were necessary onely, to the first plantation of it, yet the new rites and doctrines engrafted upon that *Gospel-religion*, with regard to *the Sacraments*, *the reliques* of Saints, and *Monks*, &c. required new miracles of a different kind, to facilitate the establishment also of these: and since living men were no longer indued with those extraordinary gifts, the inanimate part of the creation was now called up in judgement against the contemners of these rites; and the *rotten bones and dust of the Martyrs*; or *a rag of their old cloaths*; *a drop of water, or oil*; *a bit of bread*; *the chip of an old Cross*, or *the figure of a new one*; in short, every thing, which had been touched by a Saint, or consecrated by a Priest, began to work miracles, and continues to do so, in the same manner, from that time to this, through four parts in five, of the whole Christian world.

Thus we see, what clear work our Observator's distinction would make in the present question. But there is one unhappy circumstance belonging to it, which he is not perhaps aware of, or willing at least to conceal, that it is contrary to fact, and the testimony of those very Fathers, in whose defence he now urges it. For though they speak much more frequently of miracles wrought by *reliques*, and *the Sacraments*, &c. than of any other kind, yet they speak likewise of several, which they attest to be wrought by *holy Monks, then living*; by the credit of which, they chiefly established the Monkish order, though vile and contemptible in the judgement of the wiser and better sort, of the Christian laity in those very days.

Again, Dr. M——— lays it down for a maxim, in the *Introductory Discourse*, that *whenever any sacred rite becomes the instrument of real miracles, we ought to consider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation*: whence he infers, *that if we admit the miracles of the fourth Century, we must admit the rites, which*

which those miracles confirmed, and those Fathers practised. But here, again, the Observator stops us short with a distinction, without which, he says, *that reasoning cannot be true* [1]. The distinction is this; “ that miracles wrought by *the reliques* of the
 “ Martyrs, or by the *Sacraments*, or by *holy Monks*, cannot rea-
 “ sonably be interpreted to authorise any superstitious practice
 “ or doctrine, which prevailed in those times, with regard to
 “ *reliques*, or *the Sacrament*, or *Monkery*, unless there be some
 “ circumstance in them, which specifies such an interpretation;
 “ for otherwise they must be understood onely, to confirm that
 “ religion of the Gospel, for which those Martyrs died, and
 “ which those Monks professed.” In the support of which distinction, he spends two or three pages, with some little subtilty and refinement, but not a grain of sense in them; and serving onely to illustrate his own ignorance of the times, and the subject too, of which he is talking.

For instance; it was the principal devotion of the fourth Century, in all cases of sickness or distress, *to fly to the tombs of the Martyrs*; grounded on a general persuasion, that by prostrating themselves *before their reliques*, and *especially by touching them*, they should find present cure and relief: and great numbers are affirmed by the Fathers, to have been cured in this manner of all sorts of diseases, and several, *to have been raised even from the dead*. Now let him distinguish here, as much as he pleases, it is certain from the experience of all ages, that the attestation and belief of such miraculous cures never had any other effect, or were understood to have any other meaning, than to imprint an opinion of *a divine virtue in the reliques*, and consequently, to authorise *the worship*, which was paid to them: which began to be paid, from the very moment, in which they

[1] Observ. p. 8, 10.

first began to work miracles, and was soon carried to that extravagance, with which we see it practised at this day, in the Church of *Rome*.

The Observer however insists, *that if God thinks fit, to work a cure by dead men's bones, it will not follow, that dead men or their bones ought to be worshipped* [1]. But the fact is, that the worship of them did immediately follow, and has ever since followed, and must for ever follow the belief of such cures, to the utter confutation of his silly hypothesis. For in order to defend the authority of the Fathers, he first supposes it true, that miracles were really wrought by *dead men's bones*; and then, in contradiction to their authority, is forced to deny the use and end, for which the same Fathers declare them to have been wrought, and which, by the credit of those pretended miracles, gained an establishment through the whole Christian world: whereas the end, for which they were wrought, and the effect, which they have constantly produced, ought to have convinced him, and every other Protestant, that they were all mere fictions.

For it is certain, though he does not seem to know it, that all the miracles of this kind, were suspected and contemned, from the very beginning, by the more discreet and honest part of the Clergy, who argued, “ that signs and wonders were proper indeed, for the conversion of Heathens and unbelievers, whose prejudices were too strong, to be over-ruled by the cool arguments of reason; but that miracles wrought by *reliques*, within the Church and among the faithful, were of no use to the advancement of the Gospel, but tended to corrupt and debase it, by the introduction of paganish superstitions into the Christian worship.” [2]. Which controversy began with the first relique-worship of those primitive ages, in the same

[1] *Observ.* p. 10.

[2] *Vid. Hieron. Op. T. 4. par. 2. p. 285.*

manner, as it is carried on at this day between the Protestants and Papists, yet the Observer supposes, that God might be working miracles all the while, by *dead men's bones*, without intending, that they should give any sanction to a superstitious worship, intirely groundd upon the belief, that his approbation was signified by those very miracles.

But he observes, “ that the Author of *the Introductory Discourse*, would have had a better pretence for asserting, that “ we must either accept the doctrines, or reject the miracles of “ those ages, if he could produce any Monk or other person, “ who appealed expressly to miracles, in confirmation of an “ usage, not warranted by Scripture, and to be received as of divine appointment.” [1] If he had been acquainted with Ecclesiastic Antiquity, he could not be at a loss for examples of that sort; the very *Discourse*, which he pretends to confute, affords a remarkable one, in the controversy between *Vigilantius*, who protested against *the religious honors paid to the bones and dust of the Martyrs*, and *St. Jerom*, who defended them: *answer me*, says *Jerom*, *how it comes to pass, that in this vile dust and ashes, there is so great a manifestation of signs and wonders.* [2] For what is this, but a direct appeal to a divine interposition, in favor of *that relique-worship*, which the *primitive Protestant* was condemning, and the *primitive Father* defending?

Having now entertained us with all the little cavils, which occurred to him on this article, he proceeds to confirm them, by the authority of *Dr. Claget*, whose *determination*, as he calls it, on this very argument, he has transcribed at length in two paragraphs. And lest we should wonder, why the opinion of that ingenious writer should be introduced under the pompous title, of a *determination*, he refers us, for the reason of it, to the bot-

[1] Obf. p. 9.

[2] Hieron ibid.

tom of the page [1]; where we are told, *that he was once the Preacher of Gray's Inn*, as if nothing but what is decisive could be delivered from that pulpit.

Let us see then, what it is, that *Dr. Claget* has determined on this quæstion. He declares in the first place, *that the miracles of the 4th century are urged by the Romanists, as an invincible argument, of God's approving the honor given to the Saints and reliques of that age*. But when he attempts to confute that invincible argument, upon the common hypothesis, of the truth of those miracles, he does nothing more, than what our Observator has been doing, and all others must do in the same case, trifle, and shuffle, and labor for pitifull distinctions, which betray a consciousness of acting against his judgement, and oblige him after all, to signify, that he did not believe those miracles to be true. But what is more remarkable; in the single passage of the two paragraphs, here transcribed, in which *Dr. Claget* can be said to determine any thing at all, he determines in favor of *Dr. M---n's* argument, and declares the same opinion, with respect to the primitive miracles, which is declared in *the Introductory Discourse*, as it is expressed by him in the following words; *And if I should say, that they, who can be content with the old religion, [of the scriptures,] may and ought to be content with the old miracles, [of the scriptures,] I should say no other thing, but what I could justify* [2].

But *Dr. Claget*, as the Observator tells us, *imputes the false miracles of the 4th century to credulity* [3]; whereas *Dr. M---n* charges them to fraud and imposture, yet sometimes, when he is in better mood, ascribes them also himself to credulity. Whence he takes occasion to censure him, *for talking inconsistently, and at random, and varying his charge, as his humour varies* [4]. Which silly

[1] Observ. p. 11th.

[2] P. 12.

[3] 13.

[4] 15. 33.

blunder runs thro' his whole performance, and shews how little he has thought upon his subject, since this obvious reflection has never once occurred to him, "that where-ever false miracles have obtained a general credit, there *fraud and credulity* must both have been jointly employed in producing that effect; *fraud* in the contrivance, and *credulity* in the reception of them; and if either of these can be justly charged upon the Fathers, that it will have the same force, with respect to the argument of the *Introductory Discourse*."

There is one method of reasoning, peculiar to this Observer, and which I have rarely met with any where else; that in the want of arguments, he can form them at pleasure, even from his own ignorance; the instances of which, he frequently urges, as so many objections to the *Introductory Discourse*. *I cannot see this; do not understand that; am not satisfied that his account is fair; know no such thing; think the Gentleman mistaken;* are common objections with him. [1] And tho' in other writers, a confession of ignorance generally carries some appearance of modesty, yet in this, it seems to flow from that sort of pride, which cannot allow any man, to know more of any subject than himself, or any thing to be true, of which he can be ignorant.

He says, "that he knows no book, not Canonical, which passed upon all the Fathers, as genuine and divine, thro' several successive ages: nor does it follow, that because some Fathers cited spurious pieces, therefore they were held in the same rank with the Scriptures." [2] To which it will be a sufficient answer for the present, that, in the age immediately succeeding to that of the Apostles, certain writings were forged by some of the ablest and most learned of the Christians, under the title

[1] P. 5, 7, 18, 20, 26.

[2] 21.

of *Sibylline books or oracles*, which were falsely ascribed to the ancient *Sibyl*, and pretended to foretell and describe prophetically, all the principal acts and circumstances of our Saviour's life. Which books were cited by all the Fathers, and in all ages, from *Justin Martyr's* time down to the Reformation, as genuine, and inspired by God, in the same manner, as *the prophetic books of the Old Testament*; and particularly, in the 2d century, that *Clemens of Alexandria*, one of the most learned and critical of all the Fathers, appeals to their authority as divine, and confirms it by the express testimonies of *St. Peter and St. Paul*, which he draws likewise, from certain spurious books, which were current in that age, and believed to be the genuine writings of those Apostles.

But here again, he throws in one of his puzzling quæstions, and asks; "what does the author of *the Discourse* know of the abilities, learning, or religion of those primitive forgers of books, whom he calls the ablest and most learned of the Christians?" [1] To which I may readily answer, that he knows nothing more, than what every man of sense may know, as well as he, from the very nature of the thing; that books, written upon the plan, and for the defence of the Gospel, full of piety and Christian principles, at a time, when that religion was persecuted by all the powers on earth, must needs have been written by Christians; and being so artfully written, and so highly esteemed, as to pass upon the most judicious, ~~for~~ divine or apostolic compositions, they must have been written also, by the *ablest and most learned* of the Christians, at a time, when the whole body of them was generally reproach'd for their rusticity and want of learning.

[1] P. 22.

He condescends indeed to grant, tho' with some caution, and for *argument's sake*, as he says, *that the Fathers made use, both of spurious books, and forged miracles*: from which he draws this inference; "that as together with those spurious books, they used some, which were genuin, so it is natural to suppose, that among their false miracles there might be some also, which were real: and then asks, how this can help to support the general conclusion, that *no miracles were wrought in those ages.*" [1] But from a joint use of *spurious and genuin books*, to infer a joint use also of *spurious and genuin miracles*, is weak and fallacious; because there is no analogy between the two cases: for the use of books, whether spurious or genuin, depends intirely on man; whereas in the use of miracles, as far as any of them are true, God himself must also be concerned. When the leaders therefore of a Church, either thro' craft or credulity, are imposing false miracles upon the people; to suppose, that God would become a party, and throw in a true miracle now and then, to give them credit, is not onely an absurd, but impious supposition. But should I allow, that the detection of spurious books and false miracles, does not necessarily prove, that there were no true miracles in the same age, and will not consequently support Dr. M---'s general conclusion; yet the Observer's quæstion is certainly impertinent, because he might have seen, from the *Introductory Discourse*, that the proof of those forgeries was not intended, *to support that conclusion*, but onely to strengthen the probability of it, in concert with 20 others, which more directly confirm it. The whole purpose, for which it is urged, is granted by himself, and must be allowed by every body else, that those, who *forged books*, would, for the same cause, *forge miracles* too, if there

[1] P. 22.

was an occasion for them; and that the frequent use of such forgeries, which is allowed to have been made by the principal Fathers, must increase the suspicion, that all the miracles, which they attest, were of the same kind.

Among many other censures upon the Author of *the Introductory Discourse*, he charges him, "with acting disingenuously, "in publishing it, without sending his larger work abroad at "the same time, and scattering his surmises, before the evidence is heard. Which has the appearance, he says, of an "experiment rather, to try the sense of the public, than of "confidence in the justice of his cause [1]." And here indeed, I readily agree with him, that, by the separate publication of *that Discourse*, the Author of it seems to intimate some distrust of himself, and a temper totally different from that confidence, with which the Observer rushes into a controversy, without any previous acquaintance with it: who yet in this very cause, and before the evidence, as he complains, is heard, makes no scruple to pronounce sentence, and like a worthy Ecclesiastic Judge, to dismiss it at once, as frivolous and vexatious.

But whatever judgement he may think fit to declare on the subject of the *Introductory Discourse*; Dr. M—n knows it to be important, and treats it as such; yet is sensible, that he stands single in the defence of it, and aware of the censures, which it may draw upon him from the bigotted, the interested and the ambitious part of the Clergy; from some, who possess the chief preferments of the Church, and from all the numerous tribe, who court them. He remembers, what clamors and injurious suspicions, the freedom of his writings has formerly drawn upon him from that same sort of men; who treat him as an enemy, not only to the present establishment of our Church,

[1] Observat. p. 24.

but to religion itself: yet conscious of his integrity, and that his principles tend to fix them both on a more secure foundation, he writes with no other view, than to unite all reasonable Protestants the more firmly in their defence; and to guard our people, as well from *Papish superstition*, as *fanatical enthusiasm*; both of them equally dangerous to the peace of these Kingdoms, and both making advances upon us at this very time from different quarters indeed, and parties of men, but from the same source and pattern of primitive antiquity.

In these circumstances, persuaded, that he was doing service, yet decried, as if he were doing mischief to Christianity, how could he act with more candor or deference to the public authority, than by sending his scheme abroad in this plain and naked form; that if any one of superior judgement and knowledge of Antiquity, should happen to convince him, either of the falsehood or iniquity of it, he might withdraw it in time, before he had engaged himself too forwardly in it, or warmed himself and his readers too much, to judge impartially of the particular proofs, which may be alledged in confirmation of it. But if it be found after all, to contain nothing either false or iniquitous, nor to threaten any hurt to any thing, but to groundless systems, and superstitious opinions, which have no other claim to be retained, but that they have long been established, and are of no other use, but to lull us on in a slothfull ignorance and implicit credulity, or to gratify the indolence of some leading Churchmen, who think, that nothing can want a change, which contributes to their repose. If this, I say, should be the case, and no material objection be offered, but that perpetual obstacle of all reformation, *an affected dread of improbable consequences, and the danger of disturbing settlements*, he will not be driven by any discouragement, which he may meet with,

with, from pursuing his destined task of publishing his free thoughts on all quæstions, and especially on those which relate to religion, as far as he believes them to be true, and of benefit also to the public.

But to return to our Observer, who begs our patience for one word more, concerning the connection between the argument of *the Introductory Discourse*, and our controversy with the *Church of Rome*: with respect to which, it is affirmed in that Discourse, *that by admitting the miracles of the primitive ages, we shall be entangled in a series of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourselves, without allowing the same miraculous powers even to the present age.* Here again he asks, *what are these difficulties which the Gentleman is so afraid of?* declares, that *he sees none; and that we may surely be justified in admitting the miracles of the 2d and 3d centuries, without being obliged to receive the Popish legends* [1]. But by what principle or distinction may we be so sure of it? For even his *polemic genius* has not been able to suggest any: and it is certain, that every other Protestant, who has taken the most pains, towards searching this matter to the bottom, has found those pains perpetually frustrated by insuperable difficulties. In condescension therefore to his confessed ignorance, I shall endeavour to lay the quæstion before him in such a light, as may enable him to see some of it's difficulties, if his blindness be not incurable.

It is allowed by all Christians, that the miraculous gifts, which are mentioned in the Gospel, continued in the Church, thro' the Apostolic age: and it is affirmed by the Fathers and Church-Historians, that they subsisted still in the same manner, after the days of the Apostles, and were openly exerted in every succeeding age, down even to the present: which is now the

[1] Obf. p. 26.

prevailing opinion, in much the greatest part of the Christian world; and the chief argument, by which *the superstitious rites and doctrines of the Romish Church* are at this day supported.

The Protestants on the other hand, in contradiction to the Romanists, universally affirm, that *the miraculous gifts of the Apostolic days have long since utterly ceased* in the Christian Church, but cannot agree among themselves, about the time, when the cessation of them commenced, nor have been able to assign any probable criterion, by which we may declare them, to have proceeded thus far, and no farther: yet the Observer sees no difficulty in the case, and cannot conceive wherein it lies.

Many of the Protestants indeed, as it is said in *the Introductory Discourse*, take the conversion of the Roman Empire to have been the æra, in which true miracles ceased. But this is a mere arbitrary hypothesis, grounded neither on History, nor any solid reason; because miracles are said to have been wrought still, after that period, as freely as before it, and in some cases attested by the same witnesses; who, by this hypothesis, must be held worthy of all credit before that revolution, yet unworthy of any, immediately after it. But what is still of more difficult digestion; this same hypothesis, if admitted to be true, gives the lie at once to all the illustrious Fathers of the 4th Century, *St. Epiphanius, St. Basil, St. Athanasius, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, St. Austin*, &c. persons the most highly revered and Sainted by the Catholic Church, for their piety, probity, zeal, and services to the Christian religion: who have all severally recorded and affirmed great numbers of miracles, to have been wrought in their times, many years after the conversion of the Roman Empire.

If we trace the succession of miracles still lower, we shall find *Dr. Chapman* defending some even of the 5th century; the

most extravagant perhaps, that any history has recorded; yet declaring, *that we cannot reject them, without shaking the credit of all human testimony, and believing nothing but what we see and feel and know ourselves* [1]. And his fellow-laborer, Dr. Berriman, makes the same declaration, in favor of another miracle, in the end of the same century, *which cannot be discredited*, he says, *without shaking the faith of history, and rejecting all accounts of miracles, besides those of the Scriptures* [2].

Thus according to the judgement of these two Protestant Divines, distinguished by their eminent zeal for primitive antiquity, miracles were still subsisting in the Church, even after it was plunged into the depths of Popery; yet our Observer sees no difficulty. He will say perhaps, that wherever we find any superstitious rites established, or incredible facts affirmed, by a pretence of miracles, there we ought to distinguish and reject such miracles. But this is to beg the question, not to prove it; and is too precarious a way of reasoning to give any satisfaction; because what seems incredible to one, may seem credible to another: and Dr. Berriman, speaking of *the miracles of the 6th century*, has over-ruled every plea of that kind, by declaring; *that we have no reason, to dispute the truth of the facts, on account of the miraculousness, or natural incredibility of them, unless it can be proved, as it certainly cannot be, that miracles were ceased in that age* [3].

Thus which way soever we turn ourselves, we shall be ~~emman-~~gled onely the more, by our struggling. If we urge the incredibility of the facts related in these later ages; these Advocates tell us presently, that the same objection bears as strongly against the earlier ages, but that the authority of the witnesses will over-rule it in both; if we dispute the veracity of the later witnesses, they affirm them to be full as credible, as the more

[1] Miscel. Tracts, p. 167. [2] Sermon, at Lady Moyer's Lect. p. 327. [3] Ibid. 356.
antient

ancient, and their evidence as convincing, as human testimony can possibly be. So that no other part is left, but either, to reject all miracles, except those of the Scriptures, agreeably to the genuine interests and principles of Protestants: or else, to admit them all, agreeably to the practice and policy of the Romanists. For what Dr. Berriman has declared, concerning *the miracles of the 6th century*, may as justly be applied to the *miracles of the 16th*; that there is no reason to dispute the truth of them, unless it can be proved, *that miracles were then ceased*: for on this proof alone, the strength and security of the Protestant cause chiefly depend.

The Observator however proceeds to acquaint us, that our Reformers *thought it to their purpose, to challenge as much of antiquity to themselves, as they could find authorities to justify, in the ancient Fathers* [1]. And I may add; that they sometimes challenged more of it, than truly belonged to them, or was serviceable to their cause. But these Reformers, who dealt so much with antiquity, were generally of that sort, who acted under the direction of the Court, and were forced on that

[1] Obf. p. 28. But the Observator takes occasion in this place, to censure the Author of the Discourse, for citing passages from Dr. Waterland unfairly, which, if rightly quoted, would bear directly against him, [p. 28. Note †.] Yet all, which that Author has so cited, is given in Dr. Waterland's own words, without any mixture or paraphrase, and what is more to the purpose, the passage here particularly referred to, is an intire paragraph, in which Dr. Waterland professes, to have collected the sum, of what he had been endeavouring to prove, in the whole foregoing treatise: and it is not possible, that any man's sentiments can be more fairly represented, than in those very words, to which he himself refers us, for the sub-

stance of them: and if that Dr. has happened to talk differently in different parts of his writings, it certainly proves nothing else but his own inconsistency. For I may venture to affirm of the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*, what I shall say without scruple of myself, that I have never read all Dr. Waterland's works, nor any of them perhaps, quite through, but have ever valued my time too much, to spend it on such reading; and am content to rank myself among those superficial Dunces, whom Dr. Chapman so highly contemns, for satisfying themselves, in the choice of their books, with a few of the most eminent and elegant in each class. See his Charge, p. 27.

account, to act by political as well as Christian principles: whereas the greater part of the reforming Divines, as well in our own, as in foreign countries, who were not cramped by any influence of that kind, but wrote purely, for the defence of Protestantism against Popery, frankly rejected and threw out of their Scheme, all the traditions and doctrines, and whole authority of the primitive Fathers, as making no part of their religion, nor serving to any good purpose in it; of which we have clear proofs in many of their writings still extant.

The Observer having now served his chief purpose, of displaying his *polemic* talents, and shewn, to what length he could hold up the debate, is content at last, to give up the main point, which he had seemingly been contending for, and to grant the whole, of what the Author of *the Introductory Discourse* can be concerned about. For he declares, "that when
 " the Apostles died the whole system of faith was sealed up
 " and complete: and as no other faith was afterwards to be
 " admitted, so, if no miracles had afterwards been wrought,
 " the foundation would have been equally secure, since the
 " old miracles are sufficient for the old doctrines [1]." And in another place he adds these words; "say the worst you can
 " say, (and more, I am persuaded, than will ever be proved to
 " be true) that there is not so much as one miracle upon record,
 " since the days of the Apostles, that is sufficiently attested:
 " what has Christianity to do with this? Nothing. For Christi-
 " anity stands not upon the new miracles, but upon the old[2]." But tho' this be true; I must put him however in mind of what he ought to have intimated at the same time, that it is true only, with regard to that Christianity, which is professed by Protestants; whereas *Papish Christianity*, which possesses much the largest share of the Christian world, would be undone at

[1] Obs. p. 30.

[2] P. 32.

once, if the authority of the primitive Fathers and primitive miracles should be rejected in common by all Christians.

The sum then of all, which our Observator has affirmed on this quæstion, with any sense or truth, as well as of Dr. Claget's *determination*, on which he lays no small stress, amounts to no more than this, *that the Protestant religion stands firm upon the foundation of the old miracles of the Gospel; and that Protestants consequently, if they are consistent with themselves, ought to be content with those old miracles, and neglect all the rest.* And this, I say, is as much as Dr. M— can expect from the generality of those, who may happen to read his *Introductory Discourse*. For he is not so weak as to imagine, that an argument so new, and so little understood, and urged in contradiction to the most inveterate prejudices, can carry conviction with it every where, to the length of his own persuasion; or prevail at once over the testimony of 16 centuries. Yet he may flatter himself without vanity, that whether the primitive miracles be thought true or false, he shall convince the cool and considerate part of his readers, that the Protestant cause has no concern at all with them, and will find it's best defence and security, both against the Papists and the Free-thinkers, in a total neglect and rejection of them.

This is what the Observator himself has granted in effect; and what many more, I dare say, will grant with him, upon the perusal of *the Introductory Discourse*. The onely difference is, that every liberal inquirer, who seeks truth and instruction from the use of books, will acknowledge the conviction which he receives with some civility towards his instructor: whereas this writer seems to be of that class, who look upon every attempt to instruct, as an invasion on their province, and an affront to their sufficiency; and make it their business therefore, to write against all who venture to offer their thoughts to the public, without their license. With this hostile temper, he attacks

attacks the Author of *the Discourse*, tho' he had never personally offended him; and labors to fix some malignity upon his writings, tho' he owns them at last to be innocent; and when he is driven to the acknowledgment of any truth, does it with so ill a grace, as shews that he has some reason still within himself to wish rather that it had been false.

To conclude; there are two or three facts, which I would particularly recommend to the reader's consideration, as being not onely of great weight in the present controversy, but admitted also as true by all the adversaries of the *Introductory Discourse*.

1st, That a great part of the primitive miracles, and especially those of the 4th century, were mere fictions, contrived and imposed by the crafty upon the credulous part of the Christians of that age.

2^{dly}, That if all the miracles of all ages, after the Apostles, were found to be of the same stamp, the authority of the Gospel could not be shaken by it.

3^{dly}, That at the time of the Reformation, the onely time in all history when the miracles of the Church were freely examined by Christians themselves, they were all found to be false.

Now a proper attention to these facts, and the consequences of them, must be sufficient, one would think, to supersede all farther dispute on this question; and to convince every sensible and unprejudiced reader of the reasonableness, not onely of suspecting, but of rejecting all other miracles, except those of the Scriptures. It is certain at least, that it must expose the absurdity of these Zealots, in alarming a Protestant nation with apprehensions of danger from the free discussion of an argument, which by their own confession can do no mischief to any system of Christianity, but what is now professed and practised by the Church of *Rome*.

R E M A R K S

ON THE

J E S U I T-C A B A L.

R E M A R R S

ON THE

J E S U I T-C A B A L.

WHEN I sat down to examine this *Defence of Dr. Chapman's Charge*, I could not help amusing myself a while, with the quaintness of the *Title-page*; which seemed to have undergone several corrections, and to have cost the Archdeacon no small pains, before it was reduced to it's present form. In the first Advertisement, which was given of it, in the public papers, the Title, if my memory does not deceive me, stood thus; *The Jesuit's Cabinet farther opened, &c.* But the notion of opening a Cabinet, being vulgar, and what every writer would use on such an occasion, was thought unworthy, it seems, of the Archdeacon's erudition, and changed therefore, as we now see, into the more recondite phrase, *of opening a Cabal* [1].

In the latter part also of the same title, some alteration appears to have been made, after the book was sent to the Press:

[1] This change however was not made at once, nor would *Cabinet* have slipped so easily into *Cabal*, if it had not been prepared by some previous emendation: and there is reason to think, that, in running over all the changes into which it might naturally be resolved, *Cabala* was his first choice, and inserted accordingly into the Title, while the book was yet in the Press; as a word, the best adapted to the profundity of his own erudition, as well as to that mystery of iniquity, which he

was going to lay open. For about the middle of his piece, he refers us, as it were, to the Title, so reformed, and speaks in express terms of *Father Harduin's Cabala*. [Def. p. 23.] Yet on more mature deliberation, *Cabala* was finally reduced to *Cabal*; which answered more directly to the purpose, both of his *Charge and Defence*, and conveyed that very notion, which he there labors to inculcate, of *a number of men, engaged and confederated* in this Jesuitical plot.

for in the first Advertisement likewise, if I remember right, the Author of the Postscript was called a *Scurrilous*, as well as *Declamatory Remarker*; whereas in the publication of it, the word, *Scurrilous*, is now omitted: from what motive, I cannot say; but certainly, not from any scruples on the Archdeacon's part: for though his friends might persuade him, that an expression so gross would be too glaring in the first page, yet none of them could restrain him, from using it with all freedom in the second.

From this short view of the Title-page, let us pass on to the book itself; which I take the liberty to call *Dr. Chapman's*: not because common fame calls it so; nor because he had declared a resolution, of writing and publishing a *Defence of his Charge*; but because it is a work of that kind, which no body could have written but himself: because the stile, the matter, and, to borrow a little of his own language, the whole *figuration and indifferetism* of it shew the *Jesuit-Cabal* to be a *Chapman-Performance*.

The first paragraph will confirm the truth of it, which begins with these words. *A late Author, who, for reasons best known to himself, did not care for expressing his name*, has appeared very captious and splenetic against the Rev. *Dr. Chapman*. Now would a writer of any judgement begin an anonymous work, with a piece of raillery of this kind, without feeling, that it would turn upon himself, and serve as well, for the exordium of his Adversary's Reply, as his own Defence? their names are equally suppressed on both sides; and for reasons too best known to themselves; yet there is this difference, that the reasons of the Author of the Postscript, though best known to himself, may be understood likewise by others; whereas it would be difficult for *Dr. Chapman*, to assign any, but his great modesty,

desty, for the concealment of his name; who, from a consciousness of the public favor, and his own superior merit, can venture to boast, in this very paragraph, " of the strength, " the spirit and the perspicuity of his *Archidiaconal Charge*; " and of the honors, which have been paid to him on that account, by several distinct Assemblies of the Clergy: can appeal to a character, which, it is not possible to hurt, with " any man living, who knows him; and promise better entertainment to his readers, than his *Scurrius* Antagonist can " afford." But whatever his meaning might be, in this first stroke of his raillery, it happened unluckily for him, that his jest was spoiled, before it was out, and the Postscript had acquired the name of it's Author, before the *Jesuit-Cabal* was yet published.

In the next sentence however, he professes a most intimate acquaintance with his anonymous Adversary, and to know the very inside of him; and, with the zeal of another *St. Jerom*, declares, that the evil spirit, which prompts him to write at this rate, *is excessively galled, and stung by the fame and success of his writings, and cannot bear the approbation, with which they have been received; but is so full of spleen and resentment, that if he did not give a vent to those passions, by this scurrility of sneering, they would certainly burst him.* In answer to which, I can take upon me to affirm with great truth, in the name of Dr. M——, the Author of the Postscript; that he has never conceived the least degree of spleen from any of his performances, though some of them have been published against himself, but has constantly reaped that pleasure from them, which a liberal mind will always enjoy, from the works of a dull, conceited, bigotted Adversary, who had forwardly and petulantly attacked him, to find him destitute of every talent, which could recommend them to the public;

lic; and to see the efforts of his zeal and bigotry in great measure defeated, by the dullness and perplexity, with which he labors to inculcate them. Nor has Dr. *M*— ever been conscious, of bearing envy to any man whatsoever, for the superiority of his parts or learning, or, what is more commonly the object of it, his preferments; but finds great reason to be content with his present share, as well of fortunes, as of credit in the world; and to esteem that competency of both, with which Providence has blessed him, and that leisure, freedom and independency, which he has always enjoyed, above all the advantages, which he might possibly have acquired, by giving a more ambitious turn to his Life and Studies. And he should think more contemptibly of himself, than even his enemies affect to do, and that he had spent his time and pains to very little purpose, if at his years and in his circumstances, he had suffered it to be in the power, I will not say, of a little Archdeacon, but of a late great Archbishop, to give any disturbance to the ease and quiet of his mind. The sole disgust, which he can receive from any of them, and that, on the publick account, not on his own, is to see them encouraging and inculcating such a spirit of superstition and credulity in a Protestant Church, as the Papists themselves would be ashamed of: and he considers it, as the chief credit and comfort of his life, that he has the sense to condemn, and the resolution to oppose all such attempts, and their Authors, by whatever name or title they may be dignified and distinguished.

With this view he published a few remarks on *Dr. Chapman's Archidiaconal Charge*, which, instead of galling, had given him the pleasure of laughing at it more heartily, than any composition of this kind, which he had ever seen, as being, of all others, the most elaborately ridiculous. Nor was it
the

the purpose of those remarks, to cast a *blemish*, as he intimates, on his envied fame, but to do a piece of justice to the real merit both of the *Charge* and it's Author, by that best and gentlest method of correction, which nature has ordained in such a case, of laughing him down into his proper rank and character. This was the just treatment, which his *Charge* received, not onely from the Author of the *Postscript*, but from every body else: and this Defence of it, I doubt, will hardly deserve any other. Of which however, we shall be better able to judge, after we have taken a view of those parts of it, which may seem to demand a more serious regard.

There are two capital points, which he is obliged to make good, if he really means to vindicate his *Charge* from the exceptions of *the Postscript*.

1st, That *Father Harduin's plot* has been carried on with great success for half a century past, and spread it's infection far and wide, so as to be threatening the greatest danger, and working incredible mischief at this very time, to the religion, learning and liberty of all Protestants.

2dly, That the writings and authority of *St. Jerom* are of peculiar service, to confirm the religion of Protestants, in opposition to the present worship and religion of the Papists.

As to the first of these points, which is the principal subject of his *Charge*, the dispute between us is, not about the natural tendency of the Jesuit's scheme; or the mischiefs, which it might have wrought, if it had met with a general reception in the world; or the sentiments of a few particular men, or the private wishes of the whole body of the Jesuits, concerning it; but the sole question is, whether it has ever found such a degree of credit, and been carried so far into execution, as to

create any real danger, or to work any actual mischief to the Protestant cause, in any country whatsoever, and especially in *England*, where this alarm was given.

This, I say, is the single point in the dispute: yet when we come to examine, what new light the Archdeacon has produced, towards clearing up this question of fact, we find nothing more in his *Defence*, than what we had seen before in his charge; a cloud of authorities, without any weight; an ostentation of learning, without sense; his affirmations refuted by his concessions; till the sum of his defence is not only reduced to nothing, but the balance turned against himself; as every one must see, who will take the pains, to cast up the account, and weigh the particular articles on the one side, against those of the other.

For instance; on the affirmative side, he sets forth;

1st, “ That *Father Harduin*’s obnoxious pieces were licensed
“ by two *Provincials of the Jesuits*, upon a certificate from three
“ Divines of the same order, that they contained nothing re-
“ pugnant to the Catholic faith and good morals [1].

2dly, “ That *Cardinal de Bissy* gave broad hints, in his pa-
“ storals instructions, of his favorable inclinations to the Jesuit’s
“ scheme [2].

3dly, “ That seven or eight particular men, in different
“ parts of *Europe*, *M. Ballonfeaux*, a President of the Senate at
“ *Luxembourg*; a Gentleman at *Amsterdam*; the Editor of *Har-*
“ *duin*’s works; *M. Perchambaud*, a President of the Parliament
“ of *Bretagne*; a literary Journalist at the *Hague*; an anony-
“ mous writer of great fire and zeal; an Antiquarian of
“ no small note, at *Lyons*; had all of them done, or said,

[1] See Def. p. 8, 9.

[2] p. 19.

“ or written something or other, in favor of *Harduin's*
“ scheme [1].

All which testimonics he closes with a character of *Harduin*, given in the Protestant acts of *Leipfic*, 1735; in which he is declared to be a writer of *a wonderful genius, whose works will give pleasure to all, who read them, though they breath in all parts more of genius, than of truth* [2].

This is the summ of all the positive evidence, by which he pretends to demonstrate the success and danger of this Jesuitical scheme; in abatement of which, he grants at the same time,

1st, “ That the Superiors, and Principals of all the Colleges
“ and Societies of the Jesuits in *France*, published a formal
“ protestation against it, in the name of their whole
“ Order, and obliged *Harduin* publicly to retract it. And
“ that he does not question the sincerity of those Superiors [3].

2dly, “ That when Cardinal *de Bissy* ventured to publish
“ some hints in favor of it, five or six Bishops made an
“ outcry against him to the King [4].

3dly, “ That the Critics and Scholars in general of all countries, treated it as an extravagant, chimerical and impracticable whim [5]: that all the ingenious among the
“ *Jesuits themselves*, many *Benedictins* and *Sorbonists*, and
“ several other orders in *France and Italy*, sharply declared
“ their abhorrence of it: that in particular, the learned
“ Fathers *Tournemine* and *Grainville*, made strong declarations against it; and the men of sense and learning in

[1] P. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. p. 10, 11.

[2] P. 21, 22. [4] Def. p. 19.

[3] See Charge, p. 17. note (+) Def. [5] Charge, p. 10, 11, 20. Def. 5, 6.

“ *Rome*, such as *Quirini* and *Fontanini* talked with great
 “ freedom and abhorrence of it, and as he believes, with
 “ great sincerity and truth [1].

From this abstract of what he has affirmed on the one side, and granted on the other, the reader will see at once, that his affirmative proofs are infinitely overbalanced by his negative concessions.

He will see, that the solemn and sincere protestation of all the Superiors of the Jesuits, must far outweigh *the License of a Provincial*; a mere matter of form; and reaching no farther, than to testify the consistency of the Scheme with the *Catholic faith and good manners*.

That the loud remonstrances of five or six Bishops would have a greater effect, than the hints onely of a single Cardinal.

That the general consent of the Critics and Scholars of all countries and Sects; *Jesuits, Benedictines, Sorbonists*, and several other Orders, in *France and Italy*, with all the men of learning in *Rome*, is of much greater authority, than the opinions of seven or eight private men, of what rank or condition soever. In short, he will see, I say, at once, that neither the Archdeacon's *Charge* nor *Defence*, can have any thing rational or solid in it, or worthy of any other treatment, but what it has met with, of being contemned and laughed at by all men of sober sense. For should we wave all his concessions, and refer the dispute to the sole merit of his positive testimonies; we shall find them utterly trifling and impertinent, and of no significancy at all towards the confirmation of his argument; amounting, as we have seen, to nothing more than this, *that all people admired the great parts and erudition of Father Harduin, and some few, here and there, of less learning, yet as much en-*

[1] See *Charge*, p. 11, 20. *Def.* p. 5, 6, 10, 18, 24, &c.

thusiasm, perhaps, seemed also to approve his Scheme. And was any Scheme ever published by a man of reputation, how extravagant and chimerical soever, which had not the luck, to find some admirers, and to strike the fancy of a few, as wrong-headed and wild as the Author himself? yet in the present case, it is very remarkable, that, in *England*, where this alarm was given, not so much as a single person has ever been said, or suspected, to have paid the least regard to it.

But let us go still farther, and grant the Archdeacon much more, than he can either claim, or desire for the advantage of his cause, that the whole Romish Church is unanimous and zealous in the defence of *Harduin's* Scheme; yet even on this hypothesis, it would be ridiculous, to talk of any particular danger or mischief from it to Protestants, while they continue firm and united in their contempt of it; as it is evident from fact and experience: for instance; there are no articles of Popery so universally professed in that Church, as the *Supremacy of the Pope*, and *Transubstantiation*; nor any, so directly fatal to Protestantism, wherever they are received in any country: but though they are enforced by the whole united power of the Romish Church, and with many subtil arguments both from reason and Scripture, yet Protestants are under no particular alarm, nor think themselves in any immediate danger on that account; because they have the sense and learning, to discern the absurdity of them, and their mischievous effects on Society in general, as well as on the Protestant religion in particular. Much less can they apprehend any harm from the Jesuit's whim, which, if it had not been too extravagant, might indeed have raised a party for it among the Romanists, by its tendency to advance the power of the Pope and the Church, but has no relation whatsoever to Protestants; nor any thing in it, that

could invite any party or Sect of that profession to embrace it.

Should we suppose then, that the Papists were either divided about it, or united in it's defence; the sole effect, which could reasonably be expected in either case, would finally turn to the hurt, not of Protestantism, but of Popery itself. For by creating a division in that Church, it must in some measure weaken the strength of the whole; or by uniting the whole in it's support, would gradually reduce it again to that state of ignorance and implicit credulity, from which our Ancestors were delivered by the Reformation; and by restraining the learning and religion of their Clergy, to Church-traditions, Canons, and Papal decrees, would render them onely less formidable, and more contemptible to the Protestants. To alarm us therefore with a Scheme, which, though calculated to serve some particular purposes of Popery, was yet found too chimerical by Papists themselves, to be applied to any purpose, is as contradictory to common sense and reason, as the absurd conceit of the Jesuit on which it is gounded,

The Archdeacon however takes great pains to shew, that the Protestants abroad made vehement outcries against it, as *a refinement of the whole Jesuitical order*, and dangerous consequently to their religion. And it is not to be wondered at, that a Scheme of that nature, published by a man of *Harduin's* character, should at first create a suspicion among Protestants, of being more deeply rooted and strongly supported, than it afterwards appeared to be: or till *some good men* among them, as the Archdeacon says, perceived it to be *too extravagant to do any mischief* [1]. Yet, notwithstanding the authority of these *good men*, there were others, it seems, not so good perhaps, yet more fa-

gracious, who continued still to cry out against it as loudly as ever. Nor is this likewise strange, that in the Protestant countries abroad, there should be a sort of men, whom we frequently see at home, who from motives of vanity, or interest, or ambition, yet under a mask always of religion, are catching all occasions of recommending themselves to public fame and honors, by an affected ostentation of their zeal, and learning and services to the Church: and it is easy to imagine, how the example of that late great ornament of Berlin, Mr. La Croze, whose testimony makes such a figure in this Defence, might excite the zeal and emulation of the Great Archdeacon of Sudbury, and suggest to him the plan, and subject of his Charge.

But tho' he has offered nothing in this Defence, which, in any light or view, tends to confirm the argument of his Charge; yet it is curious to observe, that he makes frequent use of several topics, which directly overthrow it. For example, in demonstrating the great danger of *Harduin's* Scheme, he often reminds us, how all the Protestants, from the beginning to this day, have constantly decried and rejected it. Now if in any of those Assemblies of the Clergy to which his Charge was addressed, any one had risen up in opposition to him, with intent to calm those terrors which he had been infusing, what could he have said more effectual to allay them, than what the Archdeacon had applied to excite them? By assuring his Reverend brethren, “ that whatever he had been declaring to them with so much
“ solemnity concerning the dangers of the plot, they need not
“ be under any concern or alarm about it: for tho' the *Roma-*
“ *nists* might in some measure be divided about it, the *Pro-*
“ *testants* were all firm to a man, in their contempt and rejection of it: that half a century was now past, in which it had
“ been

“ been exerting all it's force, without making the least impression
 “ on any Protestant Church or Sect whatsoever: that in *Eng-*
 “ *land* especially, where this alarm was now given, not a single
 “ soul was ever suspected of being tainted with it in any degree:
 “ that their own ignorance of this pretended danger was a sure
 “ proof, that there was really none: and that it was a gross
 “ insult upon the sense, the judgement and the vigilance of the
 “ *English* Clergy, to talk to them with such assurance of a des-
 “ perate plot, and *the incredible mischiefs* which it had been
 “ working to their religion for so many years, and which none
 “ of them, all that time, had either the sagacity to discover,
 “ or the zeal to oppose, but their worthy Archdeacon. That
 “ they should reflect on what he himself had told them in this
 “ very *Charge*, how the plot could never obtain it's end, *till all*
 “ *the writers and monuments of Antiquity, which obstructed it, were*
 “ *cancelled and exterminated; and till the Jesuits, by their arts,*
 “ *had diffused a general neglect and disregard of them among the*
 “ *Protestants* [1]. That not one of all those antient writers
 “ had yet been cancelled, nor the least disregard to them
 “ diffused by Jesuitical arts, thro' any Protestant country:
 “ whence it was evident to every man of sense, that the plot
 “ had utterly miscarried from the very beginning, and that
 “ they were as remote from any dangers of it at this day, as
 “ their Fathers had been before them, and in short, that, from
 “ the first to the last, there never was nor ever could be any
 “ danger in it at all.”

If this alone, I say, had been urged in answer to his Charge,
 at the time when it was delivered, as it might have been with
 the strictest truth, it must needs have convinced the audience,
 that all the terrors, with which the Archdeacon had been alarm-

[1] See Charge, p. 9.

ing them, were but affected or imaginary, and his tragical representation of them a mere farce and piece of mockery, which the experience of fifty years, and of all Protestant Churches had utterly confuted.

Again, We may observe, both from his *Charge-and the Defence* of it, that *the Critics, the scholars and the learned* are supposed by him in general, to consider the Jesuit's Scheme as *an extravagant, impracticable and senseless whim* [1], which is sufficient likewise of itself, to refute all pretence of danger from it. For if the learned be against it, who can be for it? The success of it must necessarily depend on the judgement of the learned; being a project of that kind, which the multitude can have no notion of, but from their testimony and recommendation. If it had offered to the public some refined point of doctrine, or principle of devotion, proper to excite a spirit of fanaticism or enthusiasm in weak and pious Christians, it might indeed have reached to the populace, and proved dangerous in the issue to the peace of our Church: but as it is a question of dry criticism, without any such charm in it, and which learning alone must decide, the Protestants cannot possibly receive any hurt from it, till it be first authorised by the men of sense and learning of their own profession.

Yet the Archdeacon cannot help persuading himself, that the very populace are all attentive, and taking part in this dispute: for when Dr. M—n treats the Jesuit's Scheme as a *silly whim*, and worthy onely to be laughed at by men of sense; he reproves him with his usual gravity, and says, *that tho' he is so ignorant himself, to be thus deluded, he must not expect, that even the multitude with us, are now to be so cajoled and blinded* [2]. For now, since his *Charge* is made public, he fancies without doubt, that it is

[1] Def. p. 5, 6, &c.

[2] Def. p. 14.

to be found on every stall in *London*; and that every soul, who can read, is let into the Secret of *Harduin's plot*, and admiring *the strength, and spirit, and perspicuity* of language, in which he has laid open all the dark designs and *incredible mischiefs* of this *Jesuit-Cabal*.

I have hitherto been attempting to shew, how all his proofs and evidences of the plot tend onely to contradict his own account of it: yet I have one testimony against it still behind, which he will own to be of more weight, than all the rest; I mean the authority of his own dear Self: who, in one of his books, published some years ago, taking occasion to speak of *Father Harduin's Scheme*, declares it to be both *paradoxical and insignificant* [1]. Such was his opinion of it, before he had cooked up the plan of his *Charge*. But the *insignificancy* of the thing, which would have discouraged any other man from meddling with it, was the very motive, which prompted the Archdeacon to take it for his theme. He knew, that he could never display his wit and eloquence, with such advantage, as by raising wonders out of nothing, and from an *insignificant paradox*, extorting the thanks and applauses of *several distinct assemblies of the Clergy*.

Being aware however, that he might be driven, to give up the original Scheme of the Jesuit, as *stale and obsolete*, he had projected a retreat, to which he now recurs, and insists, *that one part of his story is so far from being stale, that it never came to light till 1733. and 1741*. Strange! that it should twice come to light, within the compass of 8 years, yet want to be brought to light a 3d time, within 5 years more. But so it was, that *no advice or account had ever been given of it in the English tongue*, as he tells us, *by any one before himself, not even by the late ingenious improvers of M. Bayle's Dictionary* [2]. Here then he takes

[1] Dr. C.'s Euseb. Vol. 1. p. 343.

[2] Def. p. 12.

heart again, and begins to plume himself as much as ever, on the discovery of a 2d plot, "more directly subservient, he says, "to the Popish cause, and more malignant still to antiquity "than the first; in confounding the history of 800 years, and "in the open proscription even of the *Roman Digest* and *Codes*, "both *Theodosian* and *Justinianean*, to make way for the *Papal* "Codes and *Canon Law*: and moreover, in a general massacre "of all the antient writers and monuments of the Church, to "the middle of the 13th century: and all this concluded with "a daring abuse on the whole Greek text of the New Testament, as a version onely of the Vulgate Latin: which last "was to be set up as the onely authentic text of the whole "Scripture [1]."

This at last was *the Snake in the grass*, which he talks of; or the fatal and poysonous part of the Scheme, which had hitherto been kept out of sight. But when the head of the Snake was cut off, is it not childish, to make an outcry of danger, because the tail seemed still to move? When the original Scheme had so long been exploded, and lost all power of doing mischief, is it possible, that any appendix, or fresh conceit, formed by the same Jesuit, and on the same principles, should give any just alarm, or excite the attention of men of sense? This new plot came *first to light*, he says, in 1733: let him tell us then, what hurt it has any where done, for these 14 years past. The capital mischief, which it aims at, and by which alone Protestants can be affected, is, to deprive them of their *Greek copies of the New Testament*, and to slip *the Vulgate Latin* into their hands, as the more authentic text. Yet it is certain, not onely, that no Protestant Church, but that no single Protestant in his senses has ever been induced to submit to such an exchange. What-

[1] Def. p. 13.

ever then any Jesuit, or the whole body of them may project or wish on this article, it must be wholly insignificant to Protestants; in whose custody, the *Greek text* will always rest secure from the danger, of being either privately stolen, or forcibly extorted out of their hands.

But as silly as all this must necessarily appear to every sensible reader, we find him wonderfull elate, on the merit of being the first discoverer of it; and insulting his Adversary upon it, with much contempt, “ was this too a tale, says he, which deserved
 “ no alarm or regard among our Clergy? And was this good
 “ Remarker so fond of his *stales and obsoletes*, for the sake of
 “ making a little figure with them, that he could onely attend
 “ to what was published about forty years ago, and not hearken
 “ to the more recent strokes of the Jesuit, and pass them all
 “ over in the most profound silence? The very mirror this, of
 “ Protestant candor and impartiality, towards both the Arch-
 “ deacon and the Jesuit [1]!”

But to return to *Father Harduin's* plot, Dr. M——n had affirmed of it in the Postscript, that *it was contemned particularly at Rome, as the delirium of a doting Critic*. On which the Arch-deacon takes occasion to animadvert, in so refined a strain, both of reason and raillery, that I must beg leave to transcribe the intire passage, because no abstract could possibly do justice to it. Take it then in his own words.—

“ As to our Author's particular information of the great
 “ contempt of *Father Harduin at Rome*, as if there his whole
 “ System was treated, as *a mere delirium of a doting Critic*, it
 “ has no great weight with me in it's present form, when I
 “ onely look back to some former informations, which were
 “ given us, of a certain *fine column near the Capitol at Rome*: nor

[1] Def. p. 13.

“ do I think, that every man, who is curious in *delineating and*
 “ *illustrating an old Phallus or Priapus*, is immediately to be
 “ trusted, for explaining the genuin thoughts of *Italian Mon-*
 “ *aslics, or a Roman Conclave*. Some indeed, I know, such as
 “ *Fontanini* and *Quirini*, have talked at *Rome*, with great free-
 “ dom and abhorrence of *Harduin's* projects, and I believe too
 “ with great sincerity and truth. But others may talk so to a
 “ Protestant Traveller, or to some tender Catholic consciences,
 “ though privately among confidants, they may hug and ap-
 “ plaud the Scheme, and spur on the most vigorous prosecu-
 “ tion of it, &c. [1].”

Here we see, how the Archdeacon, who never travelled farther, than from his College to *Lambeth*, professes to know, not onely what was said, but what was thought at *Rome*, yet will not allow Dr. M——n, who spent several months in that City, to be capable of giving any information, of what he had either seen or heard in it. *I know*, says he, *that such men as Fontanini and Qurini, talked with great abhorrence of Harduin's projects*. Very familiar truly! one would imagine him to be speaking of his intimate acquaintance. *Fontanini* was an Archbishop, of distinguished learning and politeness, whom Dr. M——n saw almost every day during his stay at *Rome*; and, by the advantage of his friendship, had the opportunity of many free conversations at his house, with persons of the first distinction, both for their quality and litterature; and among the rest, with the Pope now reigning; and after he left *Rome*, kept up a correspondence of letters with him, to the time of his death. But, what relates more to the present purpose, the character of *Harduin's* plot, which is said in the Postscript, to have obtained at *Rome*, of being the delirium of a doting Critic, is expressed

[1] P. 23.

in the very words, in which he received it from *Monfignor Fontanini*; whose known attachment and relation to that Court must persuade us, that he would not have used any language on that subject, which could possibly give offence there.

But the Archdeacon assigns two reasons, why Dr. *M——n's* informations from Rome, ought not to be credited. First, because the Dr. had given some *false informations*, it seems, before, concerning a certain *fine column near the Capitol*. It puzzled me a while to guess, what he could mean by this insinuation: for the Dr. had never given any information about any *column* whatsoever, nor ever heard of any *fine one*, near the *Capitol*, except the *Trajan and Antonin Columns*, which are not far from it. But I found upon recollection, that this dark hint related to a certain antique stone, of a Cylindrical form, with the names of about *thirty old Roman Legions* upon it, which Dr. *M——n* had transcribed, for the use of a former treatise, from a printed copy of some of the Editors of those antient Inscriptions: which transcript the Archdeacon was pleased to censure, as incorrect, because it differed from the copies of *the great Boissard and Gruter*, as he calls them, and unless they were mistaken, which he could not believe, the Dr.'s copy had not given the true reading [1]. But whatever he may believe or not believe, it is certain, that the one or the other, or both of them, more probably, were mistaken; because they vary from each other, more than once or twice, in their different copies of the same inscription [2]. Yet whatever difference there may be in any copies, or whatever error in the Dr.'s, the sole purpose, for which it was alledged by him, is evidently confirmed by them all.

[1] See Dr. *Chapman's* Letter annexed to Observations on the Epistles of Cic. and Brut. p. 427.

[2] Boissard. Par. 3. 102. Grut. Inscr. p. 513.

It is pleasant however to observe, how the Archdeacon, out of a fondness for his criticism, grew fond of this old Stone, and erected it presently into a *Column*. *I have so much regard*, says he, *for that Column, as to wish, that Dr. M——n had examined and represented it with a little more accuracy* [1]: and in this Defence, he has now dressed it up into a *fine Column*. Yet should we ask him of what Order, he would be puzzled how to answer; and more surprized still, if it should appear at last to be *no Column* at all, but a *Cylindrical Pedestal* of some military Statue, erected antiently upon it by the army, with the names of the several Legions inscribed, which had contributed to it's dedication [2]. But whatever it might have been in it's original form, yet at present, it has so little pretension to any sort of finery, that the rolling-stone in any garden would make just as *fine a Column*, if it were set upright onely, on either of it's ends, and, if inscribed with the names of our standing regiments, as valuable a *Column* too.

But the Archdeacon's view in this reflection was, to shew how idly Dr. M——n had spent his time in *Rome*, by neglecting to bring back with him an accurate copy of this Inscription, from his own survey of it. And whatever shame may be due to him on that account, the Dr, I dare say, will take it all to himself, and freely confess, that he never so much as saw, or made any inquiry after it. He knew, that it had been transcribed and published by several different hands, and was not invited either by any beauty of the stone, or curiosity of the inscription, to spend any of his time about it. Yet he may venture to say without vanity, that he has given the public some *informations from Rome*, which it ill becomes an English Archdeacon to take such pains to discredit; and which, for their use and impor-

[1] See Dr. C's. Letter, *ibid*.

[2] Gruter. *ibid*.

tance to the Protestant religion, have passed through several editions in our own country, as well as translations into the languages of other countries, where Protestants reside. The Papists indeed, and a few Zealots of our own Church, scarce worthy of the name of Protestants, have made it their business, as well as this Archdeacon, to decry *Dr. M——n's informations from Rome*, yet not a single article of them has ever been disproved by any: and when a Protestant Divine has the assurance, to warn people against them in this public manner, his zeal must flow from some secret motives of more weight with him, than his pretended regard either to the Protestant cause, or to an old Inscription, of no use or significance to any cause whatsoever.

The second reason, which he gives for discrediting *Dr. M——n's informations from Rome*, is still more curious: because the Dr, in a latin work, in which he had delineated and explained many original pieces of classical antiquity, from his own collection, had exhibited the figure of an old *Phallus and Priapus*. For such a man, he says, *is not to be trusted, for explaining the genuin thoughts of Italian Monastics, or a Roman Conclave*. Yet *Dr. M——n* has done nothing more in this case, than what his great *Boissard and Gruter*: than what *Figonius, Begerus, Causæus, Bonanni, Montfaucon*, &c. in short, what every man, of what character, country, or religion soever, who has published collections of Antiquities, or undertaken to explain the manners and rites of the Gentile world, had constantly done before him. And yet the Dr. before he entered upon that particular argument, took care to guard himself from any just censure, and obviate all offence to his weaker readers, by premising the example, not onely of those learned moderns, but an authority still much greater, even of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, in whose words he has happened to explain the very

grosseſt part of his ſubject: ſo that whatever ſhame may be thought due to him, for the *illustration of this old Phallus*, it muſt finally reſt upon them.

Such was the ground of the Archdeacon's cenſure, as far as I have been able to diſcover it; but as to the meaning of it, it is not in my power to find it out. All that I can pretend to ſay, of ſuch a medley of ſtrange words, as they are jumbled together in this paragraph, is, that his *fine Column, old Phallus, Italian Monaffics, and Roman Conclave*, make a compoſition of ſuch *ſtrong, ſpirited, and perſpicuous* nonſenſe, as no other writer, but with the ſame vivacity of genius, and the ſame profundity of erudition, could poſſibly produce.

After he has thus vindicated himſelf, with regard to his diſcovery of the *Jefuit's plot*, and ſet forth his great ſervices to the public, in alarming us ſo ſeaſonably with the dangers of it, he proceeds, to do juſtice alſo to his friends, *the Tunſalls and the Marklands*, by clearing them from the ſuſpicion of having any ſhare in it. The warmth of his friendſhip would not ſuffer him, to overlook the leaſt touch of mere raillery, on perſons ſo dear to him. He imagined preſently that Dr. M——n took them to be real *Loyolites*, and actually engaged with the Jeſuits abroad, and that he was repreſenting them as ſuch to the whole kingdom; upon which, he takes occaſion, to make here a public and ſolemn declaration, *that he had never any thought at all, of impeaching them; that they bear no reſemblance to the true Loyolites, have none of the marks upon them, and could not therefore be the object of his caveat* [1]: And from this outcry againſt them, as he calls it, he enters into a formal defence of all *the true and ſolid Critics*, whether living or dead, whether of our own or of foreign countries; whom he declares, “ *to deſerve love and uni-*

[1] Def. p. 25, 26.

“ *verfal esteem, as the firmeft supports of truth and erudition;*
 “ while those furious Drawcanfers, who procede not by prin-
 “ ciples of criticism, but of party and policy, and would cut
 “ off at random, againft all rules of true Critique, whole cen-
 “ turies of Authors, ecclefiaftical and profane, and diffufe an
 “ univerfal fcepticifm, as to monuments of antiquity, deserve
 “ to be marked out, as pefts to the republic of letters [1].

Since then he has thought fit, to be fo ferious, on fo flight an occafion, I find myfelf obliged to be ferious too, and to make a declaration alfo in my turn, on the part of Dr. *M—n*; that he had no real intention, any more than the Archdeacon himfelf, to impeach thofe learned Gentlemen of any plot whatfoever; nor the leaft defign to defraud them of that *amiable* character, which they have acquired with fo much pains and ftudy, *of true and folid Critics*. But as no mortal can know the real motives of action in another; and as the evidence efpecially of plots, turns not upon intentions, but overt-afts, fo the whole, which I can declare of them with certainty is; that their late attempts againft the works of *Cicero*, which bear fome refemblance of *the Jefuit's plot*, and feem to flow from the fame *malign fpirit againft the Antients*, have been found upon trial, to be perfectly innocent, and incapable of doing the leaft hurt to any thing whatfoever; and will confequently be as little known or regarded by the next generation, as the whimfical conceit of *Harduin* was by the prefent.

We are now come to the fecond point, which the Archdeacon, as I have faid, is obliged to make good, if he would vindicate his *Charge*, from the exceptions of the *Poffcript*. He has declared in that *Charge*, that the ancient Fathers of the Church, and efpecially *the Clements, the Chryfoftoms, the Jeroms,*

[1] P. 26.

and the *Austins*, are an armoury, as he calls it, on the Protestant side, continually galling the Papists in some tender part, and exposing to every common eye, the unscriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romish principles and practices [1]. In contradiction to which, it is affirmed by Dr. M——n in his *Postscript*, “ that the authority of those very Fathers, as it is recommended and enforced by the Archdeacon, would betray us into Popery; and in particular, that *Cbrysestom*, *Jerom* and *Austin*, had severally taught and practised, and warmly recommended to the practice of all Christians, certain rites and doctrines, which, from their example and authority, are practised at this day by the Romish Church, but rejected by all Protestant Churches, as unscriptural, superstitious, and idolatrous [2].

This is the subject of the dispute between the Author of the *Charge*, and the Author of the *Postscript*: the last of whom, in order to cut off all unnecessary wrangling, and to reduce the controversy to as short an issue, as the nature of a Postscript required, chose to refer the merit of it to a few facts and instances, drawn singly from *St. Jerom*, because, of all the Fathers, he perceived him to be the peculiar favorite of the Archdeacon. Now this method of proceeding is clear and direct, and what every one would chuse to pursue, who seeks nothing but the truth: and if that had been the Archdeacon's view, he ought to have given a direct answer to those facts; or to have balanced them at least by opposite facts drawn from the same Father, strong and explicit in favor of the Protestant cause, as it stands opposed to that of the Papists.

But instead of this, the whole business of his *Defence* is, to draw us away from the real subject, and to amuse us with harangues quite foreign to it; “ on the reverence due to primitive

[1] See Charge, p. 2, 6.

[2] Postscript of the Introd. Disc. p. 68.

“ antiquity;

“ antiquity; on the authority of the Fathers taken collec-
 “ tively; on the public doctrine of the antient Churches; and
 “ particularly, on the admirable abilities, innumerable excel-
 “ lencies, and treasures of learning to be found in *St. Jerom*;
 “ in consideration of which, all their blemishes, failings and
 “ peccancies ought to be overlooked; and whatever they may
 “ have dropt of a *Papists* cast, there wants no apology for it, he
 “ says, nor is there any reason to expect, that he should be re-
 “ sponsible for the errors or imprudences of a *Jerom*, because
 “ he is supposed to be a favorite with him [1].”

From this evasive way of treating the subject, and eluding the force of plain facts, one would be apt to imagine, that he was giving up the quæstion, and yielding the cause to his Adversary: yet far from any such thought, he assures us, “ that
 “ all the facts and instances, which have been or can be pro-
 “ duced from *St. Jerom*, or any of the Fathers, are nothing
 “ more than a few slight trimmings of *Popery*, which may indeed
 “ receive some countenance from them, but that he will en-
 “ gage, from those Fathers alone, effectually to confute all the
 “ principal errors of the Romanists [2]. Why does he not do
 it then, and put an end to the controversy at once both with
 them and with me? and why does he chuse to harangue still at
 large; neither producing any facts on his own side, nor taking
 notice of those alledged on the other; yet giving his adversary
 all the while, no other title, than that of a *Declamatory Re-*
marker; though he grounds his whole argument on allowed
 facts, and requires a distinct answer to them, and refers the
 decision of the cause to the merit of that answer.

But what is still more shamefull, he declares, “ that he ne-
 “ ver appealed to any of the Antient Fathers singly, nor in par-

[1] *Jes-Cabal*, p. 34, 36.

[2] *Ib.* 35.

“ ticular to *Cbrysoftom, Jerom or Austin*; for knowing well
 “ what he did, he appealed onely to the primitive Fathers at
 “ large, or to the whole body of them taken collectively, but
 “ that instead of *the Fathers in general*, which was his expref-
 “ sion, the Gentleman had flipt in, *Cbrysoftom, Jerom and Au-*
 “ *stin*, to whom he did not appeal, nor ever intended to ap-
 “ peal [1].” And this indeed, if true, must needs be thought
 a slippery trick, to put fuch a change upon the good Archdea-
 con. Let us inquire then, how the cafe really ftands; and whe-
 ther this piece of craft, which he imputes to Dr. *M—n*, be not
 a proof onely of his greater difingenuity, and a fiction of his
 own, contrived to excufe himfelf from acting that mortifying
 part, which candor and truth prefcribe, but his pride cannot
 fubmit to, of acknowledging himfelf confuted.

In the beginning of his *Archidiaconal Charge*, where he opens
 the general plan of Father *Harduin's plot*, he fpeaks indeed, in
 general, of the *antient Fathers*, as deftined to deftruction by that
 Jefuit, on account of their fervices to the Proteftant caufe [2].
 Then, in defcribing the terrible havock, which the plot had
 made among the writers of Antiquity both Greek and Latin,
 he tells us, that *this was onely the introduction to the more daring*
froke, by which the Clements, the Cbrysoftoms, the Jeroms, and the
Auftins were to fall next in the Maffacre, as being too eloquent and
primitive for a Jefuit's palate [3]. And laftly, when he comes
 to fet forth the probability of it's fuccefs, he fays, *that the liber-*
tines and fceptics would of courfe rejoice in it, and give up even their
favorites, Virgil and Horace, &c. on condition onely, that the Jeroms
might be facrificed with them [4]. Thus he firft mentions *the an-*
tient Fathers at large, as an armoury on the Proteftant fide; then

[1] Jef-Cab. 33, 34.

[2] Charge, p. 2.

[3] Ib. p. 6.

[4] Ib. 22.

specifies, what particular Fathers he means, as the most obnoxious on that account to the Jesuit; and lastly, takes occasion to signify, that, of the four, whom he so specifies, *Jerom* was the most eminently and universally odious to all the enemies of Protestantism, both *Papists and Sceptics*.

This is his whole account of the antient Fathers, with regard to their being *an armoury on the Protestant side*: and could any one, who was disposed to contest it with him, act more candidly and pertinently, than by referring the dispute, to the character of that single Father, on whom he himself lays the greatest stress? Or could any one, on the other hand, act more weakly and disingenuously, than he has done in the present case, by disclaiming an appeal to *any of the antient Fathers singly*? For, in our controversy with the Papists, the whole collective body of them could not possibly have any weight, if each of them taken singly be found to have none at all: and if he dares not trust his cause to those particular Fathers, whom he himself has distinguished, *as the peculiar armoury of Protestants*, and declared *to be grievous thorns in the sides of the Papists* [1], it is childish to pretend, that any accession of the rest, who are less usefull to us, and less grievous to our enemies, could add any new strength to it. Yet thus he shuffles on; chusing to recurr rather to any shift, and to deny even what he has said, than to give a direct answer to facts, which would expose the folly and bigotry of his principles.

And to divert the attention of the reader from the merits of the cause, and raise his indignation at the same time against Dr. *M—n*, he makes a wretched outcry against him, for “disfiguring and depreciating the virtues and abilities of the antient

[1] *Jes-Cabal*, p. 35.

“ Fathers; exaggerating their failings and peccancies; casting
 “ the worst construction on their actions and sayings; painting
 “ them malignantly in the most hideous colors of folly, super-
 “ stition or knavery; and putting them to a worse torture,
 “ than their Heathen Persecutors had ever done, and to a fiery
 “ trial, which no writers in the world had ever suffered [1];”
 with a great deal more of the same declamatory stuff, for which
 Dr. M—n has given no other occasion, than by attempting to
 shew, from express testimonies and instances drawn from those
 Fathers, that their primitive practices and principles tend
 to confirm the present doctrines and worship of the Romish
 Church.

This is a pure quæstion of fact, which has no relation to
 their virtues or abilities, or any other part of their character,
 than what is necessarily demonstrated by those same instances,
 collected from their works, on which the quæstion itself de-
 pends. For example, if, in the course of our argument, they
 are found to affirm, either from their own knowledge or the
 report of others, things manifestly false and utterly incredible;
 what else can we possibly think, or say of them, but that, *if*
they believed such things, they were grossly credulous; if not, were
crafty or interested, in imposing the belief of them upon others? And
 how shining soever their abilities may be, this is no calumny,
 no exaggeration, no torture or fiery trial, but such a treatment
 of them, as justice and reason require, and what all writers
 have ever suffered and ought to suffer: and whoever forms a
 judgement of any Author, from any other principle, than
 what is grounded on the testimony of his writings, must neces-
 sarily judge from prejudice or party, or some other motive which
 does not flow from the love of truth.

[1] Jes-Cabal, 42, 43.

The Archdeacon however, though he does not chuse to give any direct answer to those particular facts, which are alledged against him from *St. Jerom*, takes no small pains, to clear the antient Fathers in general, from the charge urged against them, of being the Authors of those *principal corruptions*, which are practised at this day by the Romanists, and condemned by the Protestants, as *unscriptural and superstitious*. Which corruptions he has collected from *the Introductory Discourse* into the eight following articles. 1. *The Institution of Monckery*. 2. *The worship of reliques*. 3. *Invocation of Saints*. 4. *Prayers for the dead*. 5. *The superstitious use of Images*. 6. *Of the Sacrament*. 7. *Of the Sign of the Cross*. 8. *Of consecrated Oil* [1].

This poor list of primitive corruptions, and it's eight articles, our Protestant Archdeacon derides, as trifling and impertinent; and of no consequence at all to us, whether they were practised or not, either by the Antient or Modern Church of Rome. *These*, says he, *are all the great instances of agreement, which our Author can find between Popery and Antiquity: and what are these? Why, the facts and instances, which have been answered by Protestants over and over* [2]. And to justify his contempt of them, he touches here and there the chief of those arguments, which have so often been urged in answer to them. 1. *That though there are several passages in the Fathers, which seem to have a Popish cast, and to look a little Popishly affected, yet it may bear a dispute, as it has often done, whether the cases on both sides be similar* [3]. 2. *That it is another question, whether the Primitive Churches are chargeable, in these articles, with any leaven of Romish Superstition at all. Nay, be is sure, that we may appeal, in these very articles, to the practice of the antient Churches, against the Church of Rome* [4]. 3. *That the usages of this kind are really nothing to the*

[1] *Jes-Cabal*, 28.[2] *Ib.*[3] *Ib.* 33, 35, 36.[4] *Jes-Cabal*, 29.

mimickry and fopperies of the later Popish rituals [1]. 4. *That the articles here charged upon the Primitive Fathers, are not the principal corruptions of Popery; nor in truth any Popery at all, but only a few trimmings of Popery* [2].

But if Popery, as he contends, was not yet in being, how could the Fathers add *trimmings* to it? Or if his meaning be, that they *trimmed up Christianity into the form and dress of Popery*; the onely sense, that his words naturally convey, I shall readily agree with him, and cut short the dispute. But instead of allowing any thing, so candid or sensible; he presents us with a different picture of Popery, and a genuin list of *it's principal corruptions and crying abominations*, as he calls them, and defies any man to shew, *that so much as one of these ever appeared in any Christian Church before A. D. 440* [3]. Yet should we grant all this, and whatever he can say of the same kind, to be true, it is nothing to the purpose, as the reader will easily perceive, by reflecting onely on the genuin nature of Popery, and the real state of our present quæstion.

For it must be remembered, that Popery is a system, of a very complex and comprehensive kind, which could not possibly be formed at once, or brought to maturity, but by the gradual improvements of successive ages. The Primitive Fathers, and especially those of the fourth Century, were the Founders of it; sketched out the plan, laid a sure foundation, raised a great part of the Fabrick, and left sufficient funds and materials, for carrying on the rest to it's full perfection. And we might with as much reason deny, that *Romulus*, and the Primitive Kings, who succeeded him, were the founders of the antient state of *Heathen Rome*, because they did not raise it to that heighth of

[1] Ib. 32.

[2] Ib. 29, 35.

[3] Ib. 27, 28.

power, which it afterwards reached; as that the primitive Fathers were the founders of the present state of *Popish Rome*, because they left a part of their work to be completed by their Successors. In both cases, the foundations were so effectually laid, and the plan carried so far into execution, that the rest would succede of course, if it was not totally deserted; and from causes and principles, of a kind somewhat similar. For the Kings of old *Rome*, that they might secure their infant state, and enlarge it's dominion, contrived such a system of laws and religious rites, as would naturally excite a kind of fanatical zeal and enthusiastic fondness for them in the people, whom they trained at the same time in such bodily exercises, as were proper to confirm both their strength and their courage: by the united force of which principles, the Heathen world became subject to the power of that Republic. Thus also, the Primitive Fathers, by the invention of certain rites and methods of devotion, with a severity of bodily exercises, and peculiar rules of life, which carried a form of sanctity, and were enforced by a pretence of miracles, infused into the multitude a spirit of zeal and superstition, too impetuous to be checked, by the opposition of calm reason, which gradually subjected the Christian world to the dominion of *Popish Rome*.

This is a short sketch of the rise and progress of Popery. It drew it's birth from the primitive ages of the Church; was nursed by the Fathers of the same ages, especially of the fourth Century, and attained gradually to it's present maturity, by the help chiefly of those articles, above recited, which were invented for that purpose and zealously propagated by the same Fathers. The Archdeacon however is sure, *that even in these articles, we may appeal to the antient Churches in opposition to the Romish Church*; and to prove the truth of what he says, has taken the pains to

I

shew,

shew, in every one of them, how far the practice of the primitive Churches was different from the present practice of *Rome*: through all which therefore, it will be necessary for me, to follow him with a remark or two on each particular article.

The substance, of what he has thought fit to declare, on the subject of these several articles, is as follows.—

1. *That there were no Monks in the Church for near three hundred years; and when they were introduced, they were under no Popish vows or bonds; nor encroached on the rights of the Bishops and Clergy; nor held estates in mortmain; nor were the creatures and tools of the Popes of Rome.*

The reader will observe, that though our dispute principally turns on *the rites and doctrines of the fourth century*, which the Archdeacon has undertaken to vindicate from a conformity with the present Superstitions of *Rome*, yet in this first article of *Monkery*, he owns it to have been introduced even in the third century; with this difference onely, *that it was not yet under any Popish vows; nor encroached on the rights of the Bishops; nor engrossed estates; nor was a tool to the Popes.* Now the fact is this, as it is represented by the Fathers themselves, that towards the end of the fourth century, there was such an amazing increase of the Monkish Order, through all parts of the Christian world, as makes it reasonable to believe, that there were greater numbers of Monks in the Church, in proportion to the extent of Christendom at that time, than are to be found in it even at this. Which was wholly owing to the zeal of those Fathers, who made it their business to recommend and extol the Monastic State, as the perfection of a Christian life, and the very pattern of an heavenly one. These Monks lived also then, as they do now, in Monasteries, founded for their sole use and reception, and under a solemn profession, or vow of perpetual chastity;

chastity; voluntary, as we may imagine at first; till by their frequent violations of it, they were gradually tied down by more strict and forcible restraints. And if they did not immediately *encroach on the rights of others, and engross estates, or become tools of the Popes*; yet such effects were sure to follow from the very nature of their institution: for it is not possible, that such numerous societies of beggarly, crafty, ambitious spirits, recommended by a reputation of wonderfull sanctity, could long subsist without acquiring both rights and estates, and attaching themselves to that power, which was the best able to protect them in such usurpations. And we find accordingly, that they made it their care, from the very beginning, to seduce the heirs of rich families into their Monasteries, against the will, and to the utmost grief of their parents, and to conceal them there, from the knowledge and search of their friends. Nor are we to suppose, that any of their later encroachments are derived from any written statutes or rules, by which modern Monks are governed, in distinction from the antient, but from such arts onely, as experience would teach of course, and tacitly prescribe to all societies of the same kind.

: 2. *That there were no invocations of Saints or Angels in the three first centuries; and even in the fourth, the addresses to them, were more like rhetorical Apostrophes (such as that of Dr. M——n to Dr. Woodward) than formal petitions: and no prayers to them were admitted in the public Offices of the Church, before A. D. 500.*

On this article it is allowed by the Archdeacon, that in the fourth century, such Addresses were made to Saints and Angels, and such religious honors paid to them, which, within a few generations after, produced a direct worship, and a *formule of prayers to them in the common Liturgies of the Church*. But here he has met with a lucky occasion, as he fancies, of distinguishing—

tinguishing all this away, and giving a stroke at the same time to Dr. M——n, which must needs strike him dumb, by shewing, that the addresses paid to Saints, in the fourth century, were nothing more, than *such rhetorical Apostrophes*, as the same himself had applied, in a certain latin speech, to his own friend, *Dr. Woodward*. As if such little attempts of the poets, or fallies of fancy, made to enliven a latin oration, in an assembly of Scholars, could bear any analogy, to the religious addresses paid to Saints, on bended knees and in a supplicatory posture, in Churches dedicated to their names, and before their altars, and their reliques, according to the manner of that century. But whatever wit or smartness there may be in the application, it is wholly borrowed from a printed pamphlet, in which the same turn is given to the *Saint-worship* of those primitive ages.

3. *That the Popish worship of reliques cannot be found in the Orders of the Church, before the middle of the fourth century: and that it was not made an article of faith, and added to the Apostle's Creed, till the time of Pope Pius IVth: a presumption unknown to the Antient Churches.*

Here again we find an identity of practice, in the primitive Church of the fourth century, and the present Church of *Rome*, in one of the most offensive and grossest superstitions of all Popery. Which, though not formally declared to be *an article of faith*, in those antient times, yet was believed as firmly, and had the same effect, *as an article of faith*, in all times, or it could not otherwise have obtained so universal an establishment. And to say the truth, a worship confirmed by a perpetual succession of miracles, had a just claim to be treated as such, in all ages and Churches, where those miracles were believed to be true.

4. *That the superstitious use of Images was never heard of, in the primitive times; nor can any one Father of the fourth century be produced to favor it.*

It is certain however, that *Images* were introduced into the Churches, in the fourth century, and, as *St. Austin* expressly declares, found *many adorers of them*, in that age [1]. And in the following ages, it is notorious, that the worship of them was practised and propagated by all the Fathers. Yet in the fourth century I have met with a story, which seems to confute the Archdeacon's peremptory assertion, on this article, by the authority of one of the most illustrious Fathers of that time, even *the great St. Basil*. The story is this, "that as that venerable Father was fervently praying before *the Image of the blessed Virgin*, to which there was annexed also a picture of *St. Mercurius the Martyr*; he received a divine revelation from the picture of that Saint, by which it was signified to him, that *Julian the Apostate*, for whose destruction he was then particularly putting up his prayers, was in that very instant of time actually destroyed [2]."

5. *That the superstitious abuses of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which are charged in the Introductory Discourse, on the Fathers of the fourth century, are tales quite foreign to the purpose; of mixing the water with the wine, and sending the consecrated elements to the absent, and the like: since no Popish distinction of seven Sacraments; no Transubstantiation; adoration of the Host, and propitiatory Sacrifices of the Mass are brought to light from that quarter.*

Yet besides those tales, which he calls foreign to the purpose, it is shewn in the same place, though he omits to take notice of it, that such notions and usages prevailed, in that age, with regard to this Sacrament, as were but very little short of

[1] See *Introd. Disc.* p. 21. [2] *Joh. Damascen. Op. T. 1. p. 327. E. Edit. Par.*
the

the Popish rites and doctrines just specified; and within a few ages afterwards actually produced them. For example, this Sacrament was then held to be *a tremendous mystery, dreadful even to Angels*; and constantly stiled *the Sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ*, and *offered up as such, both for the dead and the living, over the tombs and ashes of departed Saints and Martyrs*: which was either the same thing, with what is now called the *propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass*, or at least a very near approach to it. The consecrated bread likewise, was *locked up in boxes*, and carried about by private Christians, *as a charm, or preservative against all dangers*, and believed to work miracles and *drive Devils out of haunted houses*; and in short, to perform such astonishing wonders, that it was not possible to take it any longer for mere bread, but something apparently divine and worthy of adoration; and transubstantiated consequently into the real body of Christ, for nothing else could naturally flow from these principles and practices of the fourth century.

6. *That prayers for the dead were in use indeed among the primitive Christians; but not such, as the Papists now use, for the relief of Souls in Purgatory; because the doctrine of a Purgatory was not established till after the fourth century: and the testimonies alledged in favor of it, from Tertullian and Origen, were only the private opinions of those Fathers, not the general doctrine of the Church.*

Here the superstitious practice of *praying for the dead*, is acknowledged to have been used by the Primitive Christians, as it certainly was, from the earliest ages, after the days of the Apostles. The purpose of it, as it is declared by *Tertullian* and *Origen*, was to procure some relief and *refreshment to departed Souls, in an intermediate state of expiatory pains* [1]. And though the Church had not yet publicly avowed the doctrine of such

[1] Introd. Disc. 18, 19.

a *purgatorial* state, yet from the general practice of *praying for the dead*, we may certainly infer a general persuasion of it, as the principle, on which the practice itself was grounded. Which seems even demonstrable, not onely from the testimonies of *Tertullian* and *Origen*, but from the actual establishment of a *Purgatory*, which within a short time after was openly avowed, as the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Let the Archdeacon therefore invent what distinctions he pleases, it will be evident to all men of sense, that *the doctrine of a Purgatory*, with all the lucrative effects, which have since been derived from it to the Popish Church, was directly founded on the usages of the fourth century.

7. *That the ill uses of the Sign of the Cross, and of oil, were unknown to the Pastors and offices of the Church for near three hundred years. In baptism indeed, and in sickness, they had a ceremony of anointing with oil, and hoped in some instances for miraculous cures from it; yet these and other primitive usages of the same kind were nothing to the mimickry and fopperies of the later Popish rituals.*

In these two last articles, all that he pretends to declare is, that the abuses of them were unknown to the primitive Church for near three hundred years; whereas his argument required, that they should have continued unknown to the end at least of four hundred. Yet from his own account of them, we may collect, that such abuses of them were actually introduced within these three hundred years, as would necessarily create all the rest. For instance, *they anointed sick persons with oil*, in the primitive Church, and expected *miraculous cures* from it. They do the very same thing at this day in the Romish Church, and with the same expectation: and in both Churches, miracles are said to be wrought by it, as the ground of that expectation. The onely difference is, *that the Romish Church has made a Sacrament*

of this *Unction*, which the *Primitive Church* never thought of. But this is a difference of opinion, not of practice. And if miracles be really wrought by it, I see no absurdity in giving that name to it; and am sure, that, among the Protestants, all those, who draw their religious principles from the same source of *Primitive Antiquity*, must readily allow it to be a *Sacrament*. Then as to the *Sign of the Cross*, it is affirmed likewise to have wrought many great miracles, in the fourth century; to have driven away Devils every where before it; to have thrown open gates, which were shut against it; to have been imprinted miraculously on people's garments. And though the Archdeacon would persuade us, that usages of those times were nothing, to the mimicry and fopperies of the later Popish rituals; yet on the contrary, it is reasonable to believe, as well from the nature of the thing, as the testimonies of the Fathers themselves, that with regard to this article of the *Cross*, the fopperies of the Romish Church are much less extravagant, than those of the primitive ages; when it's miracles were fresh, and it's devotion ran high; and when every Christian, as *Tertullian* says, was possessed with such superstitious notions about it, that he could not take a single step, even in private and domestic life; could not go out of his house, or come in; put on his cloaths, or his shoes; could not bathe, eat, light up a candle; go to bed, or sit down; till he had first marked his forehead with the sign of the Cross [1].

Thus we see at last, how every thing, which is asserted, in the *Introductory Discourse*, on the subject of these Articles, is confirmed by the Archdeacon's own account of them. It is declared in that *Discourse*, that, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, all those several corruptions, were either actually introduced, or the seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of pro-

[1] Ib. 19, 20.

*ducing the fruits, which we now see in the Romish Church.** And nothing could more directly illustrate the truth of it, than what he himself has here offered in contradiction to it. •He tells us, that this or that article was unknown to the third century, yet allows it at the same time to have been common in the fourth; or if unknown still to the fourth, that it was practised in the fifth: or if it had not reached it's full maturity in any of those ages, yet from the seeds of it then sown, it became ripe and flourishing within a short time after. Which is the whole that Dr. M——n can be reasonably understood to mean, when he charges the present corruptions of *Rome*, to the principles and practices of the Primitive Fathers.

But in the article of *Reliques*, the Archdeacon has introduced a very remarkable testimony, which I omitted to take notice of in that place, because it seemed to require a more particular consideration: I mean the authority there alledged by him of *a late Great Prelate, Archbishop Wake, who did not scruple, he says, to declare, that as to the honors, due to the genuin reliques of the Martyrs or Apostles, no Protestant would ever refuse whatever the primitive Churches paid to them* [1]. I did not think it strange, that what an Archbishop had not scrupled to declare, an Archbishop's Chaplain should not scruple to defend, yet could not help wishing, that they had both of them been more scrupulous in the present case: because I take it to be evident, as well from the dictates of reason as of religion, that how *genuin soever the reliques of the Martyrs or Apostles* may be, or whatever honors may have been paid to them by the primitive Church, no honors at all can be due to them from any Christian, out of any other principle, than of mere policy, or superstition: the truth of which I shall endeavour to illustrate, by sketching

[1] Jes. Cab. 29, 30.

out a brief account of the rise and progress of *relique-worship* from the earliest ages of the Church.

Within a short time after the death of Christ, *St. Stephen*, one of the most eminent of the first disciples, became the *first Martyr* of the Christian Church. He was condemned to die by the great Council of the Jews, *and stoned to death accordingly*; and after his execution, *was carried to his burial by devout men, who made great lamentation over him* [1]. This is the sum of what we read in the Gospel, on the subject of his Martyrdom; in which *his blood is said to have been shed*, yet no care taken, to preserve the least drop of it, or any fragment of his skull, or bones, or cloaths, which might probably have been broken or rent by the violence of such a death. The piety of those *devout men*, who carried him to his grave, reached o farther in those days, than to the natural and necessary office of giving him a decent burial, and lamenting the cruel and undeserved fate of so excellent a person, and zealous champion of the Christian faith: Nor do we read any where, of an *anniversary Festival* appointed after his death, and celebrated afterwards at his Tomb, by the Apostles, or their Successors, *on the day of his Martyrdom*.

Thus the body of this great and first of the Christian Martyrs rested in it's grave, undisturbed, unknown, and unheard of, for about three hundred years; when it is said to have been discovered, *by a revelation from heaven*, in the fourth century: an age, in which the devotion of the Church was principally turned towards *the reliques of it's Martyrs*. The fame of this miraculous discovery was soon spread through the Christian world by the Pilgrims, who visited *Jerusalem*; whence they brought away some little portions of *the reliques* of this Saint; for the reception

[1] Acts viii. 2, 22, 20.

with an enthusiastic zeal for the reliques of Saints; urged on and inflamed by the authority and eloquence of all the principal Fathers of that age. Thus *Chrysostom*, haranguing on the praises of *St. Ignatius*, to the people of *Antioch*, with whom his reliques were deposited; “ God, says he, took him from you for a short
 “ time, but restored him with greater glory: and as those,
 “ who borrow money, pay it back again with interest, so God,
 “ after he had borrowed this precious treasure of you for a little
 “ while, and shewn it to the City of *Rome*, sent it back again
 “ with the greater luster. You sent him out a Bishop, but re-
 “ ceived him a Martyr: You sent him out with your prayers,
 “ but received him with crowns. And not onely you, but all
 “ the Cities on the road: for how were they all affected, think
 “ you, to see his reliques brought back? What pleasure, what
 “ exultation of joy did they express? What acclamations of
 “ praise did they send forth from all sides on the crowned
 “ Martyr?” [1] And about the end of the fourth century, as
Euagrius relates, “ the Emperor *Theodosius* was moved by a sug-
 “ gestion from God, to do some greater honors to this Martyr,
 “ by translating his bones with great pomp and solemn proces-
 “ sion, from the place, where they were first deposited, without
 “ the City, into a temple within it, which was consecrated on
 “ that occasion to the memory of *St. Ignatius*: whose annual
 “ Festival was rendered still more splendid and magnificent by
 “ *Gregory*, Bishop of that City [2].

Here then we see, what was the practice of the primitive Church, with respect to *reliques*, from the earliest ages. And after this view of it, if we should beg our Archdeacon, to inform us a little more precisely, what part a Protestant ought to act in this case; whether with the first Christians, in the days

[1] Oper. Tom. 2. p. 600. Edit. Benedic.

[2] Lib. 1. c. 16.

of the Apostles, he ought to observe *a perfect indifference or neutrality about them*, neither honoring nor insulting them; or with the first Christians, after the Apostles, *gather them with a religious care; wrap them up in silk, or fine linnen, deposit them in sacred places, treat them as the most precious jewels, and inestimable treasures of the Christian Church*; he would stick, I dare say, to his text; exhort us to follow the example of the primitive Churches; and chearfully to perform, what the authority of those purest ages had sanctified: nor would he have any scruple, about pushing our zeal too far; for he, who to the disgrace of Protestantism, has strenuously defended the grossest superstitions, and most despicable impostures of the fifth century, cannot possibly be scandalised by the less obnoxious practices of the fourth.

I cannot conclude these remarks, without reminding the reader once more, that the reason of my appealing singly to *St. Jerom*, was, not to gain any particular advantage to my argument, by selecting a character the most liable to exception; but on the contrary, to shorten the dispute, by offering one of the best and most valued characters of all the Antient Fathers, as a pattern or test, by which the merits of the rest shall be determined. For if a person of his superior parts and learning, distinguished by the severity of his life, as well as his piety, and zeal for the honor of the Gospel, could either be imposed upon himself by forged miracles, or knowingly impose them upon others, for the sake of recommending those superstitious rites, which are now practised by the Church of *Rome*, we need not look any farther; the same charge will easily be admitted, as it may more easily be proved against the rest. For which reason, I shall here add one short story more, from our own history, which occurs now to my memory, and may serve as a

fresh illustration, of what I have before affirmed, concerning the nature and effect of his writings and principles.

At the time of the Reformation, *Dr. John Storie*, an eminent Civilian, and bigotted Papist, who, in *Queen Mary's* reign, had been a chief instrument of *Bp. Bonner's* butcheries of the Protestants, fled into *Flanders* upon the accession of *Q. Elizabeth*; where he was seized by stratagem, and brought a Prisoner into *England*, and executed afterwards at *Tyburn*, for the conspiracies and invasions of this kingdom, which he had been projecting and soliciting abroad: and being admonished at the time of his execution, to declare somewhat concerning his religion, he chose to say nothing more, than that he *died in the faith of St. Jerom*. This he took to be a sufficient declaration of it; and for this, he has ever since been considered as a *Saint and Martyr* at *Rome*; where his martyrdom was printed, and represented in the English College of that City [2]. But if *Jerom* after all, as the Archdeacon tells us, be really *on the Protestant side*, and a *grievous thorn in the sides of the Papists*, it is incumbent on him, to correct the mistake of our Historians, as well as the insolence of the Romanists, and to do justice to the memory of this celebrated Dr, by reclaiming him, as a Martyr of our own Church, and as true a Protestant as himself; having sacrificed his life in the defence of that *pure and primitive Christianity*, which he is now so zealously recommending.

But the Archdeacon, as we find, will not be provoked to give an answer to any facts, which relate to *St. Jerom*: all, which he has thought fit to say to them, amounts to little more than this; “ *that Jerom* was a wonderfull scholar and fine writer, “ and tho’ he had some blemishes and peccancies, yet they were “ too trifling to want any apology: and for his own part, that

[1] See Strype's Annals of Queen Elizabeth, Vol. I. p. 522.

“ he highly esteems those primitive teachers and defenders of
 “ Christianity, whose works he has read with attention, in or-
 “ der to judge *fairly and accurately* of Christian antiquities, by
 “ the lights which he received from them: and that a modern
 “ scholar, who should scorn to accept their assistance, would
 “ make but a *sorry kind of figure* in the republic of letters [1].

How *fairly and accurately* his attentive study of the Fathers has taught him to judge of Christian antiquities, the reader will easily perceive, from the conclusion, which he has drawn from it, to the great comfort of Protestants; that *all those primitive Saints in general, and St. Jerom in particular, are an armoury on our side, perpetually galling the Papists, in some tender point, and exposing to every common eye the unscriptural and unprimitive crudities of their principles and practices* [2]. And how usefull also the *same study* is, in qualifying a man, to *make a figure in the world*, is evident likewise, from the great fame and honors, which this same Arch-deacon has raised to himself on that sole foundation.

If this then be the case, and if such advantages really flow from the study of those Antients, the Papists have great reason to expostulate with him, for the injustice offered to their religion, by the very Title of his *Charge*; *Popery the bane of true letters*. For whatever we have to say against Popery, it is notorious, that it is more immediately connected with *the study of the Fathers*, and has done much more towards promoting it in the Christian world, than Protestantism: and that one single Order of Monks has published more beautifull, correct and usefull editions of their works, than all the Protestant countries together have ever done: so that by his own principles, Popery, instead of being called the *bane*, ought to be called, the *basis of true letters*; or the onely school,

[1] See Def. p. 36, 40, 41, 42.

[2] See *Charge*, p. 2.

whose scholars are rightly qualified, *to make a figure in the republic of letters.*

But this character of Popery, as it is signified by his Title, is not a contradiction onely to his own principles, but what is still worse, seems contrary likewise to truth, and the experience of those, who have visited Popish countries; in many of which, the liberal arts and sciences are known to flourish in an eminent degree; and their Cities to abound with noble and usefull libraries, open and accessible to all, while the richest and largest of all Protestant Cities is shamefully destitute of them. When we write therefore against Popery, let us be so candid, as to give it it's due; for when we have so much truth on our side, it is a shame to recur to lies: we may call *it's doctrines, absurd; it's rites, paganish; it's worship, idolatrous*; we may call it, *a system of craft and policy*, contrived to enslave the Christian world to the dominion of *the Romish Church*: but when we ascribe to it what is false, we expose ourselves to the just contempt of the Romanists themselves, and instead of discrediting their religion, give them a bad specimen of our own.

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
FREE INQUIRY
INTO THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS,

Which are supposed

To have subsisted in the CHRISTIAN CHURCH, &c.

From the OBJECTIONS of

Dr. *DODWELL* and Dr. *CHURCH*.

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
FREE INQUIRY, &c.

DR. *Dodwell* takes occasion to acquaint us, in his Preface, *that his performance was not intended for the public view, but the perusal onely of a private friend; till being communicated to several others, whose judgement he had great reason to value, it was committed to the press by the unanimous advice of them all.* Dr. *Church* also, after the example of his partner, could not deny himself the pleasure of declaring; *that he likewise had the honor of receiving the approbation of some eminent, learned and judicious persons, who had taken the trouble of revising his papers, and advised him to offer them to the public.* This method of puffing their works *a priori*, so flattering to the generality of our writers, is a sort of pride, which I cannot assume to myself; who have no man's judgement to trust to, but my own; no *Clerical Synod* to call around me; no *Episcopal Oracle* to consult. I am acquainted indeed with many of the Clergy, whom I highly esteem; and whose advice might be usefull to me on several occasions; if the subjects, which I have chosen to defend, did not forbid me to seek it: for their sakes, I mean not for my own; lest the suspicion of any communication with me, might hurt their fame or fortunes, and expose them to the same envy, which I myself have incurred. For heterodox opinions in the Church, like treasonable words in the State, impart a guilt even to the hearer, and make him an

accomplice in the crime, unless he purge himself by a discovery, and impeachment of the author.

But to return to our Doctors; it is certainly a mere impertinence, to talk of the approbation given to their books, before they had passed through the press, since their merit can only be ascertained by the success of that passage, and the reception, which they may afterwards find, not from a cabal of private friends, but from the general voice, and judgement of men of sense; unprejudiced, and unbiassed with regard to the point in dispute. And here again, I must own, these Doctors have received an honor, which I can never hope to obtain, from the public testimonial of a great and famous University, to whose judgement I have ever been disposed to pay the highest regard. On this indeed, they have great reason to plume themselves; but would have had much greater, if that learned Body could stamp the truth of opinions by the same seal, with which it stamps diploma's, and confers honors on the Authors of them. For in the present case, it has fallen out very unluckily both to those, who conferred these honors, and to those also, who now wear them; that even before the collation of them, one of the very books, on the account of which they were given, was effectually confuted, and, in every article relating to the main question, shewn to be wholly trifling and impertinent; and incapable of adding the least advantage to the cause which it defends, or of doing the least hurt to that which it had undertaken to overthrow. And the confutation of either of the two Doctors may be applied very justly to them both: for in the more bulky volume of the Second, we find nothing more than some little enlargement of the same arguments and objections, the same cavils and evasions, which we meet with in the First.

Now these, I say, are substantially confuted by Mr. *Toll*; a Clergyman of *Hampshire*, bred, I suppose, in the same University; and who would have been a credit to any, though not yet honored with any *Diploma*, nor likely to reap any other reward for his pains, than what an honest mind and honest fame will be sure to give to his disinterested defence, of what he takes to be true, in an Inquiry of no small importance to the Christian Church.

I should have been glad therefore, for the sake of the University, which will ever engage my good wishes, that the zeal, which it has expressed on this occasion, for the primitive Fathers, and their miracles, had been a little more patient, and not hurried it on, to crown it's champions before the victory; and by giving it's sanction to opinions still in dispute, to make itself a party in a controversy; which may possibly end, as many have done, to the mortification of those, who have ventured to give judgement in it, before both sides have been heard.

These Doctors begin with an examination of my Preface; wherein I had laid down a few general principles, which might be of use, as I imagined, to prepare the reader to form a right judgement on the subject of the *Free Inquiry*. But here, they meet with many passages, which greatly offend and puzzle them; some as carrying a suspicious meaning; others, a dangerous one; and others as wholly unintelligible, and having no meaning at all [1]. Yet these passages, as they own, have no relation to the question in dispute; and the sole use which they make of them, is, to give them an invidious turn, and charge them with pernicious tendencies, in order to prepossess the reader with an odious opinion of my character and principles,

[1] *Dod.* 5, 13, 15. *Ch. Pref.* vii. 17.

and, by consequence, a favorable one of the zeal and piety in exposing them, and to warn all good Christians of that poyson, which I was covertly intending to infuse. Yet the meaning of these very places will appear, I dare say, to every candid reader, to be both clear, and inoffensive; cloathed with no affected obscurity, nor carrying any other sense, than what I shall ever be ready to avow and openly defend.

For instance; I have said, that this question concerning the miraculous powers of the Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by those powers, and of the witnesses, who attest them. Then, after some reasons given, why the credibility of facts ought generally to have more weight with us, than the credibility of witnesses, I conclude the paragraph in these words; “ The testimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to our senses, in this wonderfull fabric and constitution of worldly things, may properly be called the testimony of God himself: as it carries with it the surest instruction in all cases, and to all nations, which in the ordinary course of his providence, he has thought fit to appoint for the guidance of human life [1].

There is another passage or two of a similar kind, and of equal offence to these Doctors, in which, after censuring the rashness of forming peremptory arguments, as my adversaries are apt to do, upon the supposed necessity or propriety of a divine interposition, in this or that particular case, I add; “ that the whole, which the wit of man can possibly discover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, must be acquired by a contrary method; not by imagining vainly within ourselves, what may be proper or improper for him to do, but by looking abroad, and contemplating what he has actually done,

[1] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 10.

“ and attending seriously to that revelation, which he has
 “ made of himself from the beginning, and placed continu-
 “ ally before our eyes, in the wonderfull works and beautifull
 “ fabric of this visibible world [1].” Again, in conformity with
 this principle, I observe, “ how fallacious the judgement even of
 “ the wisest men has been, and ever will be, when deserting
 “ this path of nature and experience, and giving the reins to
 “ fancy and conjecture, they attempt to illustrate the secret
 “ councils of Providence [2].”

These are the passages which chiefly offend them, they declare them to be crude, unguarded, alarming expressions, big with dangerous insinuations, inconsistent with my own concessions, that they prove too much, and seem to assert the impossibility of all miracles; so as to have made one of my Answerers believe, and all the rest of them suspect me, to be a Deist, nay that it cannot be excused from open Deism, from which therefore I ought to purge myself [3]. Since I am called upon then so solemnly, to explain myself on the subject of these passages, I shall take this occasion to open them a little more particularly, and declare my real view in them, tho’ persuaded at the same time, that no explication of them can be wanted by any disinterested reader, as well as that none, which I shall give, will ever satisfy these Doctors, who now demand it.

One of them appears to be scandalised, by the title of *Revelation*, which I have given, to that discovery, which God made of himself in the visibible works of his creation. Yet it is no other, than what the wise in all ages have given to it: who consider it as the most authentic and indisputable revelation, which God has ever given of himself from the beginning

[1] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 22. *Ch.* p. 75. [2] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 20. [3] *Ch.* vii. 17, 65.

of the world to this day. It was this, by which the first notice of him was revealed to the inhabitants of the earth; and by which alone it has been kept up ever since, among the several nations of it. From this the reason of man was enabled, to trace out his nature and attributes, and by a gradual deduction of consequences to learn his own nature also, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God, or his Fellow creatures. This constitution of things was ordained by God as an universal Law or rule of conduct to man; the source of all his knowledge; the test of all truth: by which all subsequent revelations, which are supposed to have been given by God in any other manner, must be tried and cannot be received as divine, any farther than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original standard.

It was this divine law, which I referred to, in the passages above recited, being desirous, to excite the reader's attention to it, as it would enable him to judge the more clearly and freely of the argument, which I was handling. For by contemplating this law, he would discover the genuine way, which God himself has marked out to us for the acquisition of true knowledge, not from the authority, or the reports of our fellow creatures, but from the information of the facts, and material objects, which, in his providential distribution of worldly things, he hath presented to the perpetual observation of our senses. For as it was from these, that his existence and nature, the most important articles of all knowledge, were first discovered to man, so, that grand discovery furnished new light towards tracing out the rest, and made all the inferior subjects of human knowledge the more easily discoverable to us by the same method.

I had another view likewise in the same passages, and applicable to the same end, of giving the reader a more enlarged notion of the question in dispute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifested to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to observe, that they were all of them great, noble, and suitable to the majesty of his nature; carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and shewing themselves to be the productions of an allwise and almighty Being: and by accustoming his mind to these sublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine, whether those miraculous interpositions, so confidently affirmed to us by the Primitive Fathers, can reasonably be thought to make a part in the grand scheme of the divine administration; or whether it be agreeable, that God, who created all things by his will, and can give what turn to them he pleases by the same will; should, for the particular purposes of his Government and the service of the Church, descend to the low expedient of visions, and revelations; granted sometimes to boys, for the instruction of the Elders, and sometimes to women, to settle the fashion and length of their veils, and sometimes also to the Pastors of the Church, to injoin them to ordain one man a lecturer, another a Priest; or that he should scatter a profusion of miracles around the stake of a Martyr; yet all of them vain and insignificant, and without the least sensible effect, either of preserving the life, or easing the sufferings of the Saint; or even of mortifying his persecutors, who were always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor Martyr to expire by a miserable death. When these facts, I say, are brought to the original test, and compared with the genuine and indisputable works of the Creator; how minute, how trifling, how contemptible must they appear? and how incredible must it be
thought,

A VINDICATION of

thought, that, for the instruction of his Church, God should employ ministers so precarious, unsatisfactory, and inadequate; *as the extasies of women and boys, and the visions of interested Priests;* which were derided at the very time by men of sense, to whom they were proposed.

That this universal law was actually reveled to the Heathen world, long before the Gospel was known to it, we learn from all the principal sages of antiquity, who made it the capital subject of their studies and writings. *Cicero* has given us a short abstract of it, in a fragment still remaining from one of his books on Government, which I shall here transcribe in his own words, as they will illustrate my sense also, in the exceptionable passages abovementioned, which appears so dark and so dangerous to my Antagonists.

“ The true law, says he, is right reason, conformable to
 “ the nature of things; constant, eternal, diffused through all;
 “ which calls us to duty, by commanding, deterrs us from sin,
 “ by forbidding; which never loses it’s influence with the good;
 “ nor ever preserves it with the wicked. This law cannot
 “ possibly be over-ruled by any other; nor abrogated in the
 “ whole or in part: nor can we be absolved from it, either by
 “ the Senate, or the people: nor are we to seek any other com-
 “ ment, or interpreter of it, but itself: nor can there be
 “ one law at *Rome*, another at *Athens*; one now, another
 “ hereafter; but the same eternal, immutable law comprehends
 “ all nations, at all times, under one common Master and
 “ Governor of all, God. He is the inventor, propoundor,
 “ enactor of this law: and who soever will not obey it, must
 “ first renounce himself and throw off the nature of man: by
 “ doing which, he will suffer the greatest punishment, tho’
 “ he should escape all the other torments, which are commonly
 “ believed to be prepared for the wicked [].

Our

Our Doctors, perhaps will look with horror on all this, as rank Deism; but let them call it what they please, I shall ever avow and defend it, as the fundamental, essential and vital part of all true religion, and what the Gospel itself must adopt, as it's best foundation and support. The fragment was preserved to us by *Lactantius*, who lived in the third Century, and was the best Christian writer of his age; who, after the recital of it in his works, makes this reflection upon it; "what man, tho' already acquainted with the mysteries of God, could set forth the law of God with such force as this? who yet was far removed from the knowledge of the truth. For my part, I look upon those, who utter such truths without knowing them, as persons inspired by a divine Spirit. But as he clearly saw the force and the ground of the holy law, so, if he had known or could have explained it's precepts also, he would then have performed the part, not of a Philosopher, but of a Prophet [1]." Here we see a Christian writer, who lived in the third Century, frankly acknowledging this law, as it is explained by *Cicero*, to be the law of God; and which our knowledge, even of the mysteries of God, as propounded to us by the Gospel, could not inable us to illustrate with such force, as the improved reason of this great and virtuous man: which corresponds also with what *Cicero* has elsewhere declared of the same law, that it was the mind of God, governing all things by eternal reason; whose substitute or interpretor on earth was the reason and mind of the wise [2].

This is all the explication which I can give, towards healing the scruples of those, who are offended with the passages above mentioned, how far it may satisfy our Doctors, I nei-

[1] D. Jus. vi. viii.

[2] Leg. 2. 4.

ther know nor care: for tho' it will ever be my desire to give all satisfaction to every candid and liberal inquirer, yet in the present controversy, these Answerers have shewn, that they came with no view of inquiring freely and philosophically, what was true, but to defend with all their skill, what their prepossessions and ambitious views made them resolve to support at any rate, in defiance of all the light and conviction which could possibly be offered on the contrary side. This will clearly appear to all men of sense and candor from the general turn and spirit of their performances, and from their futile, evasive and illiberal manner of treating the most important arguments of the *Free Inquiry*; which I shall now therefore proceed to examine; without troubling the reader with any more of their prefatory objections, which are all chiefly of the same kind; not relating to the main question, but cavilling only on some incidental points, of little or no moment to it, in order to draw something out of them, that by tainting the credit of the Author with the weaker part of their readers, may infuse a general distrust of his argument.

Let us enter then into the *Free Inquiry*; where the first argument which I made use of towards confirming my general position, is the silence of the Apostolic Fathers, with regard to any standing power of working miracles, as residing still in that age for the conversion of the Heathen world. This silence is frankly allowed by the first of my Antagonists, Mr. *Jackson*, who insists however and endeavours to shew, that the inference, which I draw from it, is vain and groundless. These Doctors however, more stout than their Leader, and resolving to dispute every inch of ground with me, utterly deny the fact of their silence, and affirm; that tho' they do not indeed enlarge on their miraculous powers, nor make any direct appeal

peal to them as their successors do, yet that many occasional hints and plain references to them are to be found in their writings.

The principal instance, which they produce in proof of this assertion, is from the Epistle of St. *Clemens to the Corinthians*; which, as it is paraphrased by *Archbishop Wake*, does expressly assert the subsistence of miraculous powers to that particular age. And upon the authority of this paraphrase, of which I had not taken any notice, they presently reproach me, with the willfull suppression of a testimony, which directly overthrows my argument, and to which I had not attempted to give any answer [1]. And here indeed I must confess, that the passage, as explained by the Archbishop, is full to their purpose, and contrary to my own, yet knowing it to be such, that I willfully omitted it. But I can plead at the same time, with great truth, that the reasons, which moved me to omit it, were, first, the utter insignificancy, which it appeared to have, as to any proof or evidence, relating to this question, and secondly, a regard also for the character of that venerable Prelate, which made me unwilling to recall into public light, a paraphrase, which I took to be unworthy of him, and of all others that I had ever observed, to be the most palpably forced and dressed up, without any ground or color from the text, to serve the point, which he was inculcating, concerning the continuance of the miraculous powers to the times of these Apostolic Fathers.

The Words of the Text, as they stand in the Epistle clear of the paraphrase, and translated by the Archbishop himself, are these, “ Let a man be faithfull; let him be powerfull in
“ the utterance of knowledge; let him be wise in making an

[1] D. 27, 28. Ch. 94, 5.

“ exact judgement of words ; let him be pure in all his actions :
 “ but still, by how much the more he seems to be above others,
 “ by reason of these things, by so much the more will it behove
 “ him, to be humble-minded, and to seek what is profitable to
 “ all men, not his own advantage [1].”

Thus stands the passage in the Archbishop's English Edition of the Epistles of these Apostolic Fathers ; where no man, whose mind was not prepossessed with the same hypothesis, or senses dazzled with the authority [2] of the Archbishop, could find a syllable, which bears any sort of reference to miraculous powers, or suggests the least hint of the continuance of them to that age [3]. How is it then, that the Archbishop has contrived to give such a turn to it ? why, not by any critical art, or grammatical rule, but by forcibly thrusting his own sense into it ; in a manner so gross and arbitrary, as would fix the same sense, or any other upon any passage whatsoever. We see, that the words of the text unparaphrased, are clear of any miraculous sense ; for in his Preliminary Discourse to these very Epistles, he has shewn us, how easily this may be performed on any proper occasion, by the help of a commodious paraphrase.

The passage then, when opened and illustrated by the Archbishop's explanatory translation, stands thus ;

“ Let a man have faith ; that is, *says the Archbishop*, such a
 “ faith, by which he is able to work miracles : let him be
 “ powerfull to utter knowledge ; that is, mystical knowledge,
 “ *says the Archbishop*, for to that the expression manifestly re-
 “ lates : let him be wise in discerning of speeches ; for that
 “ was another gift, *says the Archbishop*, common to those times :
 “ let him be pure in his actions : but still, by how much the

[1] Wake's Ep. S. 48.

[2] Ch. 104.

[3] T. 19.

“ more.

“ more he seems to excell others, that is, *says the Archbishop*,
 “ upon the account of these extraordinary endowments; by
 “ so much the more will it behove him to be humble-mind-
 “ ed [1].”

The recital of this paraphrase will readily convince every man of sense, that I could have no other reason for omitting it, than what I have already alledged; nor could I ever imagine, that, in a controversy of this kind, which can be determined onely by the authentic facts and testimonies of antiquity, any one, who professed to be searching into the real ground of it, would attempt to prove by a paraphrase, what he could not prove from the text, and instead of the positive testimony of an Apostolic Father, which his cause necessarily required, take up with the arbitrary comment of a modern Prelate. Such are the shifts, to which these pretended champions of truth are driven in their defence of the primitive miracles: on which I shall make no farther remark, but refer my reader to Mr. *Toll*, who has very effectually and particularly exposed the impertinence of all the little arts and sophistry, with which they labor to extort miraculous senses, out of the dark hints and equivocal passages of these Apostolic Fathers.

Dr. *Dodwell* proceeds, in the next place, to defend the particular proofs, which his Father had formerly alledged from these same Fathers, to evince the continuance of the miraculous powers to their days. These proofs, he says, *are recited by me with contempt*: yet I am conscious, that in reciting them, I never had any such intention; and cannot see how my words can fairly be interpreted to imply any. Nor has it ever been my custom, to shew a contempt of any man, who had not

[1] Wake's Prel. Dis. p. 113.

justly deserved it of me by some unprovoked and contemptible attack upon myself. In the present case however, I cannot but applaud the piety of a son, in expressing so jealous a concern for the reputation, and such a zeal to defend the opinions of a learned and virtuous Parent.

The first of these proofs is taken from the title or address of *Ignatius's* Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*; upon which I have already said what I thought sufficient for my purpose in the *Free Inquiry*, and the objections, which Dr. *Dodwell* has since made to it, are shewn to be wholly insignificant by Mr. *Toll* [1]. But as his defence of his Father's interpretation wholly turns upon the sense of the word, *charisma*; which he affirms to be a term *peculiarly appropriated to denote extraordinary gifts*; and as he makes much use of the same observation, towards confirming some other objections, in different parts of his work; so I shall add a word or two on this occasion, to shew this favorite criticism to be vain and groundless, and the imaginary conceit of some minute Critic, who happened to want it, as this Doctor here does, for the support of a particular hypothesis. For the word, *charisma*, as well in it's native and proper sense, as in the use, which has ever been made of it both by the sacred, and the Primitive writers, which signifies nothing more than a gift, whether it be natural or supernatural; ordinary, or extraordinary: wherefore in order to obviate the application of so silly an observation in our present controversy, I had shewn how one of these Apostolic writers, St. *Clemens*, had applied the word, *charismata*, or gifts of God, to denote the different talents and abilities, natural and acquired, by which the characters of men are usually distinguished; as *strength*, *riches*, *wisdom*, *humility*, *continence* [2]. But Dr. *Dodwell* declares, that *he sees no such thing*;

[1] Toll's Def. p. 23.

[2] Free Inq. p. 7.

And that the very gifts or *charismata*, here recited, *may strictly be interpreted of supernatural endowments* [1]. What can we say to such perverseness as this? or of what use can it be to reason with so incorrigible a bigotry, which can reject the clear testimony of our senses, rather than give up a groundless hypothesis?

But my notion of the word, *charisma*, may be confirmed also, as I have said, by many testimonies from the sacred writers, as denoting simply *a gift of God*, of what kind soever it may be: of which it will be sufficient to give an instance or two. The gift of God, or *charisma*, says St. Paul, is eternal life [2], and in other places, where he is speaking of the gifts of God, we find him using the words, *charisma* or *dorema*, indifferently, as terms synonymous, and denoting the same thing [3]. And we sometimes see the same word applied to the gift of worldly riches, or an ability to minister to the necessities of the poor.

On the whole then, as the sole defence, which the Doctor makes of the proof of those numerous miracles, which his Father had drawn out of this passage, is grounded on a mistaken sense of the word *charisma* [4]; so the Father's proof, and the son's defence, must of course fall to the ground. And after all the pains, which they have been taking, to puzzle and confound the obvious sense of the text, it will appear at last to be nothing more than this; that the *Church of Smyrna*, being blessed with faith and charity, which Ignatius extolls in this very Epistle, as the most excellent of all gifts, and what the Apostles themselves prefer to the whole list of them, was deficient in nothing, which could be required to the accomplishment and perfection of the Christian Character.

[1] Dod. p. 30.

[2] Rom. vi. 23.

[3] Ibid. 15, 16.

[4] Ch. p. 98.

The Doctor leads us on to another of his Father's proofs, on which he observes, that as I am apt to call for facts, so his Father has here presented me one beforehand [1]. But the fact, here referred to, is not of such a sort, as I shall ever be disposed to call for: nor do I find myself to be presented, in this instance, with any thing more, than what had been offered to me in the last; an unnatural and extravagant interpretation of an obscure passage, whence his Father had inferred the existence of a chimerical fact, of which there is not the least example or intimation in all history. But since the Doctor strenuously defends the truth of his Father's interpretation; asserts the words to be incapable of any other sense, and professes a particular contempt of mine; it will be necessary to recur to the passage itself, that by reviewing and comparing the two opposite expositions, we may settle at last it's real and unquestionable meaning.

St. Ignatius, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, written on his journey towards that City, where he was going to be exposed to the wild beasts in the Amphitheater, earnestly begs of them, *that they would not shew an unseasonable good will to him, by hindering his martyrdom, but would suffer him to be food for the beasts* [2]. The question now is; what were the means, which he referred to on this occasion, and which the brethren might apply to the hindrance of his martyrdom? Mr. Dodwell the Father, affirms them to be prayers: which had a power, he says, of disabling the beasts from assaulting the Martyr, when exposed to them in the Amphitheaters. But if that had been the meaning of Ignatius's request, it would imply, that the efficacy of such prayers had been tried in other cases of martyrdom, prior to that of Ignatius: yet no such fact is to be found in all history,

[1] Dod. p. 31.

[2] Wake's Ep. of Ign. §. 4.

nor any mention made of it by the Apostles or Apostolic writers, except by a single intimation in this very Epistle, where *Ignatius* says, that he would *encourage the wild beasts, that they might be sure to devour him, and not serve him, as they had done some, whom out of fear, they had not touched* [1],

But the whole tenor of the Epistle seems utterly to confute this *Dodwellian* hypothesis. In which the Martyr acquaints the *Romans*, that he had written to the other Churches, and signified to them all, that he was willing to die for God, unless they, the *Romans*, should hinder him [2]. Now if this hindrance was to be effected by their prayers, surely the prayers of every other Church must have been as effectual, and as much to be apprehended by *Ignatius*, as those of the *Romans*: yet, tho' in this journey from *Asia*, he wrote to the *Ephesians*; to the *Magnesians*; to the *Trallians*; to the *Philadelphians*; and to the *Smyrneans*, as well as to the *Romans*; yet it was from the *Romans* alone, that he feared any obstruction to his martyrdom, and whom he entreats to forbear it; to the rest he signifies no fear of hindrance from them, nor any request, that they would not attempt to give him any: which clearly shews, that the hindrance, which he so much dreaded, was not to arise from prayers, but some other means, which were peculiarly practicable to the Christians of *Rome*, and of no other Church whatsoever.

I have already explained my sense of the passage in question, in the *Free Inquiry*, and shewn, that the request of the Martyr, related to the intercession and interest, which the Christian brethren of *Rome* proposed to make among their friends and fellow citizens to preserve him from his cruel fate. And this I have confirmed by the express testimony of the original narrative of

[1] Wake's Ep. of Ign. §. v.

[2] Ibid. §. iv.

this martyrdom, written by persons, who were present at it, and who for that purpose had accompanied the Martyr from *Asia*. I have added the authority also of Dr. *Cave*, a writer, in the highest esteem with these admirers of the primitive Fathers, who in the *Life*, which he has written of this Saint, gives the same interpretation to the case now before us. Yet all this is of no weight with Dr. *Dodwell*, who contemns the notion of any interest or intercession that could be made for the life of the Martyr, as extravagant and impossible, and what will not bear an examination [1], and goes on to observe with great gravity, that *Ignatius* was sentenced by the Emperor himself, who was now absent from *Rome*, and had left no authority there which could mitigate the punishment: that no interest whatsoever could avail against an Imperial decree, nor, all the power of the Court of *Rome* prevent the Saint from being thrown to the wild beasts, when *Trajan* had commanded it: so that the only possible method of saving him, which remained, was a miraculous interposition in his favor to be obtained by the efficacy of prayer. This is the sum of his reasoning, by which he confirms his Father's interpretation: and this the examination, which my account of the matter will not bear: yet it is all trifling and declamatory, grounded on loose conjecture, and an imperfect knowledge of the history of those times, as I shall presently shew, by opening a little more explicitly the real nature and circumstances of the case.

These persecutions of the Church, as the writers observe, were frequently brought on and forced as it were upon the Government, by the rage and clamors of the populace: whose hatred to the Christians, was ever exerting itself by seizing and dragging them to the tribunals of the Magistrates, and calling

[1] Dod. p. 33.

loudly for vengeance and punishment upon them: and when this spirit was once raised it was not easily appeased till it had drawn on a general persecution. This we may suppose to have been the case under *Trajan* and his successors the *Antonines*, the most virtuous and just of all the *Roman* Emperors, yet all of them successively persecutors of the Church. It was the same sort of indulgence to the humour of the populace, which obliged all the Emperors on some of the greater Festivals to entertain them with public shews and sports in the Circus and Amphitheater, the chief of which were the combats of Gladiators and of wild beasts, and the production of notorious criminals to be thrown to those beasts. This at present was the unhappy lot of the Christians, whom the mob were often demanding to be produced on these occasions for their sport: and for this *Ignatius*, as the leader of the Christians in *Asia*, was now sent to *Rome*, to be exposed to the beasts in the Amphitheater, for *the delight of the Roman people*, as the Emperor *Trajan*, who condemned him, is said to have expressed it [1]. For one of those Festivals was now approaching, for the celebration of which the diversions above mentioned were always provided and supplied from all the provinces of the Empire.

When *Ignatius* approached towards *Rome*, guarded all the way by soldiers, the Christians who came out to meet him, offered to employ all their interests and endeavours to prevent his execution, by moving the people, when assembled in the Amphitheater, to join with them in a common cry and demand to have his life spared. This was agreeable to the custom of *Rome* in these very shews; where in the combats of the Gladiators, tho' the conquered party was doomed of course to die, yet if he had behaved so, as to excite the compassion of the people, and raise

[1] vi.

a general clamor in favor of his life, it was always granted to the demand of the assembly: and as the chief end of all these shews was to keep the multitude in good humour, so the case was the same with regard to persons condemned to be thrown to the beasts: where if the mob had taken a fancy to reserve the life of any one in the same manner, they would certainly have been gratified in it.

This was the experiment, which the Christian brethren proposed to try in favor of *Ignatius*; nor was the proposal improbable: their number was now considerable in *Rome*, and many of their friends and acquaintance might have been prevailed with to assist in so compassionate an attempt: so that when an infirm old man came to be produced in the Amphitheater, incapable of giving them any diversion, by any sort of resistance to the beasts, the Christians hoped, that the united voice of their whole party, strengthened by the help of particular friends, as well as of many others, whom compassion would naturally join to them on such an occasion, would be of force enough to procure the life of the saint, from the presiding Magistrate: who from the nature of his office was intrusted always of course with a discretionary power of gratifying the people in any demand of that sort.

I shall now leave our Doctor to the quiet possession of his *Father's proofs*, as he calls them, which he may hang up in his parlor with the escutcheons of his arms, as a record of perpetual honor to his family, by inabling them to boast of an ancestor, who by his singular skill and sagacity, had recovered to the Christian Church, after a succession of seven centuries an illustrious miracle, wholly unknown and unobserved by all the primitive Fathers. Nor can I omit on this occasion to take notice of the management of *Dr. Church*, with respect to these

'Dodwellian proofs, for since they came from his partner's Father, he thought it improper for him to meddle with them, and contented himself with the satisfaction of seeing them *defended at large*, as he says, *by the learned, judicious, and ingenious son* [1]. In which he gives us a little specimen of the arts and craft of these Answerers: for tho' by dropping the defence of those proofs, he betrays a consciousness of their weakness, yet he excuses that step with such complements to the Defender of them, as may persuade a common reader, that he takes them to be really strong and completely defended, which yet he dares not venture to affirm.

There is another article, or two, relating to the miraculous gifts of this age, which it will be proper to clear up, before I take leave of these Apostolic Fathers. I have observed in the *Free Inquiry*, for the prevention of all unnecessary cavils, that if from any passages which may be found in these Fathers, it should appear probable to any; that they were favored on some occasions, with extraordinary illuminations, visions, or divine impressions, I shall not dispute that point with them, but remind them only, that the gifts of that sort were merely personal, and did not in any manner relate to the question before us [2]. But in this, my adversaries insist that I have overthrown my whole argument. "Are not these, says Dr. *Church*, the instances of miraculous powers? and if there "were any such after the days of the Apostles, does not the "new scheme fall to the ground [3]?" Yes; I own them to be of a miraculous kind, if, as Dr. *Dodwell* says, *they be real* [4]. Who, by that expression, seems to entertain some doubt about them himself, but whether they be real or not, it is certain, that they are nothing to the purpose of our present controversy;

[1] Ch. p. 97. [2] Free Inq. p. x. [3] Ch. p. 107. [4] Dod. p. 42.

as not being the effect of any standing power granted to the Church, for the conversion of the Heathens. All that I have allowed or supposed in this case is, that there may be a passage or two in these Apostolic writers, of a dubious signification, which weak and pious minds, persuaded of the frequency of divine impulses and illuminations, indulged to private Christians, in all ages of the Church, may imagine, to denote something of that extraordinary kind. Yet if they should be strictly interpreted to that sense, the very matter of them would render the notion contemptible to all men of judgement. In one of these passages, St. *Ignatius* intimates, that he had been instructed by the Holy Spirit, concerning *the divisions of the Church of Philadelphia* [1]. And in another, St. *Polycarp*, by means of a vision, is said to have foretold his own death, and the manner of it, three days before it happened [2]. To which
I can

[1] He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man. But the Spirit spake saying on this wise; *do nothing without your Bishop*. Epist. to the Philad. §. vii.

[2] *Socrates* also, as *Plato* relates, had a vision, while he lay in the public prison under sentence of death: in which a beautiful woman appeared to him, and calling him by his name recited this verse of *Homer*.

*Ἡμεῖς μὲν τρίτῳ φθίνω ἐρίβωλον
ἰκοίμην. Il. IX. v. 363.

Upon this, he declared presently to his friend *Crito*, that he was certainly to die on the 3d day: which fell out accordingly. His vision therefore was as prophetic as *Polycarp's*, and equally confirmed by the event: yet they both probably flowed from the common source of all such dreams

or visions; the strong impression, which the sense of their uneasy and uncertain condition, perpetually occurring to their waking thoughts, would naturally leave upon the fancy even in sleep. Some Critics of great name seem to have been puzzled to discover, how *Socrates* could collect from this verse, that he was to die on the 3d day; and have imagined it to be intimated to him by the word *Phthia*, as being derived from the verb *φθίνω* or *φθίω*, which carries in it the sense of perishing and dissolution. But it was the natural and literal sense of the verse, as it was spoken by *Achilles*, that gave him the hint; in which *Achilles*, on account of the affront which he had received in the Grecian camp, declares himself resolved to quit it and return to *Phthia*, his native home, where a voyage of three days would land him in ease and peace. This *Socrates*
took

I can apply nothing better than what Mr. Toll has already said in answer to Dr. Dodwell on this very point; where after a brief review of the nature, the subject, and the evidence of these predictions, he adds; *to cut off therefore at once all reasonings and inferences about them, let it be understood, that we dispute the facts* [1].

But on this article of visions, I am charged by my adversaries with a gross inconsistency: for after I have declared the pretended visions of these Apostolic writers to have no relation to my argument, yet in the progress of my work, I have taken much pains in combating the credit of such visions as having a close connection with it. *How are these things reconcileable?* says Dr. Church, *visions and revelations are one of the five kinds of miracles, which he examines. If such visions, &c. do not at all relate to the present question, then all that part of the Inquiry, where these are considered, no less than sixteen pages, are nothing to his purpose* [2]. Yet these things are all consistent, and reconcileable at once to every one, who does not, either willfully or inadvertently, overlook the true state of the fact.

took to himself as an admonition, that he likewise should be at his home, in the same time; for his philosophy never considered this earth as his home, but promised him another world, where the souls of the just after death were to enjoy a perpetual state of peace and felicity.

Again; it is said of Polycarp, that he was a prophetic teacher, and that every word that went out of his mouth, either had been fulfilled or would be fulfilled. [See Martyr. §. xvi.] The same is said of Cicero, by Corn. Nepos, who personally knew him, and long survived him. *Such was Cicero's prudence, says he, that one would imagine it to be a kind of divination:*

for he foretold not only those things, which happened, while he himself lived, but gave warning, as a Prophet, of the things, which we now see in common practice. [Vit. Attic. 6.] Now Cicero's predictions are ascrib'd only to his prudence, Polycarp's to inspiration. But where's the difference? Polycarp foretold his own death, or some calamity perhaps, which was likely to happen to the Church, Cicero foretold the important events and revolutions, which happened after his death to the greatest Empire in the world: for the defence of whose liberty he sacrificed his life.

[1] Toll's Def. p. 38.

[2] Ch. p. 108.

It is allowed on all sides, that the Apostolic Fathers make no mention of any standing miraculous powers, as indulged to the Church in their days: and that the visions, which are ascribed to them, are collected onely from an incidental hint or two, of an obscure and precarious meaning: and as such visions also were onely of a private and a personal kind, without any use or effect towards the conversion of the Heathen world; so it is evident, that they could not in any sort belong to the question in dispute. But in the following ages, when an appeal was expressly, constantly, and openly made by all the Fathers, to a perpetual power of working miracles, as actually subsisting among them; and to which the Heathens themselves were invited to come, and be eye-witnesses: and when in the catalogue of these miracles, *visions* and *prophecy* are particularly enumerated, as common in the Church; and granted to women, and boys, and all sorts of Christians whatsoever; then visions became the proper subject of my work, and required an examination of them, as well as any other gifts, which are claimed by the same Fathers. This is the genuin state of the case, which clearly shews, that the inconsistency with which it is charged, flows wholly from the blunders and inattention of those, who charge it.

But there is another argument still for the miraculous powers of this age, which our Doctors have kept in reserve, as their forlorn hope, in order to rally, and renew the fight, with it, if their first attack should prove unsuccessful. They were aware, that all the positive evidence of miracles, which could be drawn from the Apostolic Fathers, would be found too weak at last, to make any impression in favor of their opinion: so that after all the pains, which they have been taking to push that sort of proof as far as it would go, they now change hands; take

take up the contrary side of the question, and attempt to confute me by that very silence of these Fathers, with which I had been pressing them. *Cicero* in one of his youthfull orations, speaking of certain witnesses, whom he had been examining, says; *tacendo clamant*; he condemns the expression afterwards, as too puerile; but the application of it made here by our Doctors is certainly much more so. No proof of an affirmative kind can reasonably be drawn from mere silence, whatever force it has with regard to facts of history, is chiefly negative, oftner detracting from their credit, than adding any strength to them in the present case, therefore when we reflect, that immediately before the times of these Apostolic Fathers, miracles are allowed to have subsisted in great abundance; yet that the said miracles have long since been withdrawn, at some time or other which remains still unknown, and unsettled, we cannot be at a loss to determine, whether the silence of half a century, which immediately succeeded to that age of miracles, should incline us rather to believe, that they were continued still to the Church, thro' that silent period, or that they were actually withdrawn at that very time and no other.

Dr. *Dodwell*, on the other hand, reasons thus; “ If their
“ silence were as total and uniform, as Doctor *M.* contends, it
“ might be urged strongly on our side of the question. For
“ it is scarce credible, that they should no where take any no-
“ tice of so great and sudden an alteration, as must have hap-
“ pened, if the principal leaders of the Christian cause, and
“ Governors of the Church had all at once been deprived, in
“ those times of adversity, of the privileges and succours, which
“ common converts enjoyed in the generation immediately
“ preceding [1].” Now it is granted by all Protestant Doctors,

[1] Dod. p. 41.

and in particular by these two: that the Governors of the Church were in some age or other actually deprived of those miraculous succours, which their predecessors had enjoyed, yet the time, when this alteration happened, is a secret, which, as Dr. *Church* says, it is very difficult and perhaps impossible to us, to discover [1]. And if I should ask the reason, he would tell me presently, because the Fathers, as if ashamed to tell us how they had forfeited those favors, were wholly silent on that article. And thus Dr. *Dodwell's* argument is utterly confuted by fact and experience as well as their own concessions.

But the most remarkable circumstance in the present question is, that tho' all Protestants are agreed in allowing and believing, that after the third or fourth century at least, all true miracles actually ceased, yet in all the succeeding ages, there is not a single leader or Governor of the Church, who either owns any such cessation, or does not in the most grave and solemn manner attest the continuance of them in great abundance to his own age. Wherefore, as the silence of the Apostolic Fathers is singular, and not to be found in any other age whatsoever, from the days of the Apostles, down to the time of the Reformation; so that their circumstances and characters, we may imagine, were singular also, and unlike to those of every other age: by being destitute of those extraordinary powers, which their predecessors the Apostles had enjoyed; yet unwilling to supply them by forgeries as their successors are supposed, and the greatest part of them allowed to have done.

Thus we see, how these Doctors, after all their efforts, to strain and wrest to their purpose, two or three obscure passa-

[1] Ch. p. 4.

ges of these Apostolic Fathers, have not been able to draw out the least proof, of the subsistence of any miraculous powers among them; especially of those, which are the proper subject of this inquiry. For this is a distinction, which I find myself obliged to repeat, since all these Answerers, who appear to have known nothing of the state of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, have not yet learnt from it, as in the first place they ought to have done, a right state of the question. The position, which I affirm, is, that, after the days of the Apostles, no standing power of working miracles was continued to the Church, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of unbelievers. This is what the title of my work implies; what my whole reasoning turns upon; and what I have often signified in the course of it, to be my precise meaning. Yet all my antagonists treat my argument, as if it absolutely rejected every thing of a miraculous kind, whether wrought within the Church by the agency of men, or on any other occasion, by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles whenever he pleases, nobody, I dare say, will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, since the days of the Apostles, is an inquiry, which I do not at all enter into: the single point, which I maintain, is, that the Church had no standing power of working any.

This distinction was seen at once by those writers, who have appeared in the defence of my book; and who have justly rebuked these Answerers for their neglect of it; as being necessary to a right management of the dispute, and obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this admonition, they still declare it to be a mere evasion and subterfuge, never

[1] T. p. 29. Let. 16.

intended by me at first, but an after thought, contrived to elude the force of some objections, which were found to press me [1].

The distinction however, tho' just and clear, was not marked out by me, for the sake of any advantage, which I might derive from it to my cause, for I know none, which it could give, but merely to shorten the dispute, and to prevent unnecessary wranglings, on facts and instances, which do not belong to it. For tho' I have no better opinion perhaps of the Miracles, said to have been wrought without the Church, than of those, which are affirmed to have been performed within it; yet as I confine my argument intirely to the latter sort; I would not be drawn away, to an examination of facts, foreign to my purpose, and but little regarded at present in the Christian world, from my more important task, of dissolving a chain of pretended Miracles which at this very day enslaves and ties down the whole Christian Church, to certain doctrines and practices, which tend to debase the simplicity of the Gospel, and to give a superstitious turn to the piety and devotion of it's professors. If my adversaries therefore had paid a due regard to the distinction just mentioned, it would have saved them some trouble in many instances, and especially in the story of *Polycarp's* Martyrdom, and the Miracles which accompanied it: on the defence of which they now exert all their zeal, declaring them to be decisive, and to have utterly overthrown my whole Scheme [2]. Whereas in truth, whatever be the real character of them, they are nothing at all to the purpose, as being neither wrought by any standing power in the Church, nor carrying any sort of evidence, that any such power was then subsisting in it.

[1] Ch. Pref. p. 8, 9.

[2] In. p. 9. D. p. 36.

But if these Miracles have no relation, as I say, to the present dispute, it is asked, for what reason then did I introduce them into it? To which I answer, that it was for no other, than to expose the trifling and frivolous nature of them; and to shew, how fondly the Christians of this early age were disposed to give a miraculous turn to every unusual incident, which might happen to take place on any important and affecting occasion. My manner of introducing them declares my contempt of them; and I thought, that a bare recital of them would render them as contemptible to others as they appeared to myself [1]. But I have missed my aim with these Answerers, who have the confidence still to affirm, that I do not dispute the reality of them, but leave them in possession of Miracles, as great and wonderfull as any in the Christian Church; that I stand convicted by my own concessions and by acknowledging the genuineness of the Epistle, confirm the genuineness of the facts related in it: than which nothing can be more senseless and absurd. For tho' I call that piece one of the most authentic in all antiquity, I shew at the same time, that I am not declaring my own opinion, but that which was generally held of it by the Church: and when I mention the advertisement annexed to the end of it, concerning the miraculous discovery of the same piece by a revelation from *Polycarp*, will any imagine, that I could believe so silly a fiction, tho' I made no reflection upon it? No, I took the very mention of it, as I have said, to be a clear detection of it's forged character.

Wherefore all, which I now propose to add on the subject of this wonderfull Martyrdom, shall be restrained to the article of *the Dove*, said to fly out of the wound, that was made in the body of the Saint; this all my Antagonists give up at once as

[1] Free Inq. p. 124.

incredible, and consider it either as the blunder of the transcriber, by putting one word for another; or as an interpolation craftily inserted into the text, after the time of *Eusebius*, who, in the abstract, which he has given of this same narrative, takes no notice of this flight of the Dove. They are all aware, that if this article should be thought genuine it would overthrow the credit of all the other Miracles in the same narrative; which for that reason they take great pains to clear from this fable, as they call it, which yet in defiance of all their efforts, will, upon a fair and critical examination, appear to be as authentic a part of the original piece, as any other miraculous fact related in it.

The first edition of the intire Epistle was published by Archbishop *Usher*, with the passage of the Dove in it, from a Latin version, the oldest copy, as he tells us, of the whole piece, that was any where extant; supposed to have been written soon after the time of *Eusebius*, and to be the same, which is mentioned to have been publicly read in the Churches of *France*, till the sixth century: which Copy Archbishop *Wake* also declares to be so well attested, that we need no further assurance of the facts which it contains [1]. All the Greek copies are of a later date, than the Latin version, yet all of them retain this article of the Dove: and from a collation of these the learned *Cotelerius* and *Ruinart* published their several editions of this same Epistle; both of them tho' Papists, very candid and judicious inquirers into the genuine monuments of Christian antiquity: and in the last edition also, set forth by that eminent and protestant Critic *M. Le Clerc*, who was never suspected either of superstition or credulity, the Dove still keeps its place, without any reflection or censure upon it by the Editor.

[1] Wake's Prel. Disc. p. 59.

Archbishop *Wake* indeed has omitted it in his English Translation, for which he makes the following apology; “ I confess, “ I am so little a friend to such kinds of Miracles, that I “ thought it better with *Eusebius*, to omit that circumstance, “ than to mention it from Bishop *Usher*’s Manuscript. And “ indeed besides the strangeness of such an adventure, I cannot think, had any such thing truly happened at his death, “ that not only *Eusebius* should be ignorant of it, but that “ neither St. *Hierom*, nor *Ruffinus*, nor the *Menæa* of the Greek “ Church should not have made the least mention of it. “ Wherefore there must have been either some interpolation, “ or because that does not appear, it may perhaps be better “ accounted for by the mistake of a single letter [1].” This mistake M. *Le Moyne* has endeavoured to correct by an ingenious emendation; which some of my Antagonists lay hold of, and others reject and prefer the notion of an interpolation as the best solution of the matter [2].

There is one reflection however added here by the Archbishop, which might have induced him, one would think, to have given us this story as intire, as he had found it in all the editions; for if it has any weight in it, it refutes at once all the vain conjectures of these minute Critics, and proves the circumstance of *the Dove* to have been an original part of the manuscript. For he observes, upon the authority of M. *Le Moyne*, that *Lucian*, in his raillery on the death of *Peregrinus*, who voluntarily committed himself to the flames, in the sight of all *Greece* at the *Olympic* games; and out of whose funeral pile he makes a Vultur to ascend, is supposed under the character of that frantic Philosopher, and his Vultur, to ridicule the Martyrdom and Pigeon of *Polycarp* [3]. The reflection is

[1] Ibid. p. 57.

[2] Ch. p. 277.

[3] Wake’s Prel. Disc. p. 57.

allowed by the Archbishop to have *something of a foundation*: and men of sense, I dare say, will think it to have a good one, when they consider, that the death of *Peregrinus* happened about the same time with that of *Polycarp*; and that *Lucian* was contemporary with them; an Apostate from Christianity, and ever after it's bitter enemy; and taking all occasions, to deride the doctrines, the rites, the credulity and superstition of it's professors. There is a second observation, intimated also by the same Archbishop, which seems to give a further confirmation to the genuineness of *Polycarp's Dove*: for he refers us, in a marginal note, to *Prudentius*, who celebrating, in one of his hymns, the Martyrdom of a noble Virgin, called *Eulalia*, makes *a Dove to fly out of her mouth*, at the very moment, in which she expired. Now a fiction of so strange a kind would hardly have been hazarded, one would think, by so pious a writer, if there had not been a precedent for it, in the more famous Martyrdom of *Polycarp*.

There is nothing now left, to discredit the story of *the Dove*, but the silence of *Eusebius* with regard to it; whose account of this Martyrdom is allowed to be the oldest of any other whatsoever. But it must be observed, that *Eusebius* does not give us here the intire narrative, but an abstract of it onely, or an abridgment, proper to be inserted into his general history; in which the writer, according to his own discretion and judgment, always omits whatever he thinks insignificant, or unnecessary, or of suspicious credit, or improper to be offered to public view. In the abstract then; which was not written by him till about two hundred years after the fact, he has thrown out many passages which he found in all the earlier copies, and which are still found in all the modern editions, and among the rest, even one of the miraculous kind, in which the body
of

of the Saint is said, *to have stood in the midst of the flames, not as flesh, which is burnt, but as bread, which is baked* [1]. Now the sentence here omitted, is found in all the editions, in common with the article of the Dove; yet is not imputed to any mistake, or interpolation of a later date, but to the design and choice of the compiler, who might think the comparison of *Polycarp's body in the flames with bread baked in an oven*, too coarse and unnatural to deserve a place in his History.

But whatever reason *Eusebius* might have for the omission of this passage, he had certainly a much greater for the omission of *the Dove*. The copies of this narrative appear to have been very rare, so that the scandal which this particular story might have given, had not yet reached far, but lain dormant as it were and obscure among a few only: but if *Eusebius* had transcribed it into his History, it would soon have been spread into all hands, and even of the chief persons of the Empire, which was now become Christian. We cannot doubt therefore, but that he willfully dropt it out of his abstract, as these champions are now endeavouring to throw it out of all the copies: yet not on the account of it's being a mistake or interpolation of any transcriber, but because every body would see it to be a most flagrant and shamefull fiction. In short; as the story is of a kind, which was much more likely to be dropped, when found in any copy, than after it had been dropped to be recalled into it again; so it is not credible, that, after so great a man as *Eusebius* had published the narrative itself without it, any one would have the hardiness to insert or interpolate it, if it had not been found in all the other copies, which lay dispersed in different hands, and believed to be a genuin part of the original piece. As to the silence of the later writers about it, it is of no weight

[1] p. 15.

at all: they followed only the transcript of *Eusebius*, and were glad to get rid of so ridiculous a fiction, when they had so good an authority to plead for the omission of it.

I shall now dismiss the miracles of *Polycarp's martyrdom*, on which, tho' they have no relation to the question in dispute, and are in themselves utterly contemptible, my Answerers lay the greatest stress, as if they were subversive of my whole argument. They have my leave however, to enjoy them and insult me with them as much as they please; but will find in the end, that the more pains they take to hold them up, the more they will hurt their own cause and strengthen mine. Since men of sense will never be brought to believe that any true Miracles could be subsisting in that age, which has no better specimen of them to give us, than this: nothing but a perplexed and patched up story of a few trifling facts, of a precarious interpretation, which may reasonably be imputed to the fiction of an Enthusiastic piety, ever flattering and deluding itself with a vain persuasion of the present influence and interposition of the Deity.

And that this will certainly be the fate of these Miracles is confirmed to us already in some measure by the authority of a very learned and judicious writer, who, without any respect to the present controversy, treating on the proper credibility of Miracles in general, and taking occasion, in the course of his argument, to consider the narrative of *Polycarp's Martyrdom*, finds it necessary to declare, from the impertinence and inconsistency of the miraculous facts related in it, *that there is great reason to be jealous of the veracity of the compiler, and just ground to suspect the credit of a story, in which we see, that there has been tampering* [1].

As

[1] See Two Previous questions impartially considered. p. 26, 30.

As to the testimonies of the succeeding Fathers, which come next to be considered, it is agreed on all sides, that they strongly

N.B. The Martyrdom of Bishop Hooper, in the Reign of Queen Mary, is compared by the Compiler of it, *J. Fox*, to that of *Polycarp* from a similitude of several circumstances, which are ascribed to them both. I thought it proper therefore to present the reader with a short abstract of it, and a reflection or two to illustrate the comparison.

When this Bishop was fastened to the stake, and the officers were going to bind his neck and legs with hoops of iron, he utterly refused them, as *Polycarp* is said to have done, and would have none; saying; I am well assured, that I shall not trouble you, and doubt not, but that God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire. The fire did not presently kindle, being made of green faggots, which were mingled with reeds to quicken them: at length however it burned about him, but the wind having full strength in that place, blew the flame from him, so that he was no more but touched by the fire. Within a space after, a few faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with them, which burned at the nether parts, being driven about by the wind, save that it did burn his hair, and scorch his skin a little.—When the second fire was spent, he wiped both his eyes with his hands, and, beholding the people, said with an indifferent loud voice, for God's love, good people, let me have more fire. All this while his nether parts were burning, but the faggots were so few, that the flame did not strongly burn his upper parts till a third and more vigorous fire being kindled some time after, put an end to his life. Thus he stood three quarters of an

hour or more in the fire, even as a lamb, and patiently abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards nor backwards, nor to either side, till his nether parts being burnt, and his bowels fallen out he died as quietly as a child in his bed. See *Fox Chronic.* vol. iii. p. 156.

Now there is as much reason to imagine a miraculous interposition in the Martyrdom of this Bishop, as in that of *Polycarp*. The flame blown all about him by the wind, scorched his skin, yet burnt his hair; which shews, that in some turnings of it, it must have made the resemblance as it were of an arch, as it is said to have done around *Polycarp*, or it could not have had that effect of burning the hair of his head, while it onely scorched his body, which may be said therefore, as truly as *Polycarp's*, to have stood in the midst of it, not as flesh that is burnt, but as bread, that is baked. But when the second fire was found ineffectual to burn him, if the executioner had then dispatched him with a sword, there would have been a better pretence for a Miracle, than in the case of *Polycarp*: for he suffered the trial onely of one fire without being burnt, but this Martyr of two. There is another circumstance observed by the Historian, which made *Polycarp's* Martyrdom let's grievous than this of *Hooper*, for when the fire did not burn, they ministered a quick dispatch to *Polycarp* by a sword, moved probably by some compassion, but the tormentors of *Hooper* suffered him without compassion, to stand three quarters of an hour in the fire. As to a voice from heaven to encourage the Martyr, whatever use it might be of in *Polycarp's* case, there was no occasion

ly and explicitly affirm the continuance of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, as constantly exerted in the Church through each succeeding age. On this head then my Answerers allow, that I have fairly drawn out all the principal testimonies, which relate to our quæstion, and enumerated all the extraordinary gifts and powers which these Fathers declare to have subsisted among them. Nay instead of charging me with the suppression of any, their sole exception is, that I have added one to the list, which does not belong to it, and which none of the Fathers have any where claimed, *viz. the gift of expounding the Scriptures*. As this therefore is the onely point which these Doctors here dispute with me, and which, as we shall presently find, is a point of no small importance to my main argument, so it will be necessary to employ a little pains in examining and clearing up the truth of it: where by opening the ground and reason of ascribing this gift to the Church, I shall shew the reason also for which my Adversaries so stiffly reject it.

Irenæus, speaking of the miraculous powers which were frequent in his time, says; we hear many in the Church indued with prophetic gifts; speaking with all kinds of tongues; laying open the secrets of men for the public good; and *expounding the mysteries of God* [1]. Now as by the mysteries of God, which are said here to be expounded in the Church, nothing else can reasonably be understood, but the mysteries proposed to us in the scriptures, so in a recital of this gift in another

casion for it here: *Hooper* had an assurance within his own breast, which he accordingly declared, that God would give him strength to endure the extremity of the fire: and the event shewed that such strength was actually given to him, and

that his declaration therefore was prophetic: and the patience and fortitude with which he bore his sufferings, may justly be thought as miraculous, as of any the most celebrated Martyrs of the primitive ages.

[1] 2. vi.

part of my work, I call it *the gift of expounding the scriptures*; as I think myself warranted to do, by the manifest sense of the words, which seem incapable indeed of any other. Dr. *Dodwell* on the other hand declares; that in all the passages that I had cited, he does not find any such claim of an extraordinary power of expounding the Holy Scriptures. *Irenæus* indeed speaks of expounding the mysteries of God, but says not one word of the Holy Scriptures [1]. Dr. *Church* affirms the same thing, and says; that *in looking over the accounts, he finds nothing like any claim to a miraculous gift of expounding the Scriptures* [2]. But what a pityfull way of quibbling is this? the word, *scriptures*, is not expressly mentioned in the testimony, therefore, the gift of expounding them cannot be implied in it. But if *the mysteries of God*, do not mean the same thing, I should be glad to know what other meaning they can possibly have: for tho' our Doctors reject this, they give us no other in it's place, but leave the words to shift for themselves, and the reader to take them in what sense he pleases, provided, that he does not take them, for *the mysteries of the Gospel*, which it is their business to deny.

But besides this passage of *Irenæus*, from which alone the thing itself may fairly be inferred, we learn from the express and direct testimony of *Gregory*, called the wonder-worker, that the gift of expounding the Holy Scriptures was actually claimed and reckoned as one of the most esteemed and excellent gifts of those primitive times; and was poured out. in the largest measure, upon his Master *Origen*.

His words are; “ *Origen* has received this greatest gift from
“ God, with an abundant share of it from heaven; to be the
“ Interpreter of the words of God to men; to understand the

[1] Dod. p. 57.

[2] Ch. p. 127.

“ things of God, as if God himself were speaking, and to
 “ expound them to men, that men also might hear them [1].”

This then is the gift, to which we are referred by *Irenæus*, whose words cannot possibly be understood of any other, unless we suppose those early ages to have been entrusted with some secret mysteries, peculiar to themselves, and unknown to their Successors, and which God had not thought fit to revele to us in the sacred Scriptures.

St. *Paul* calls himself and his fellow laborers, *Apollos* and *Cephas*, *the stewards or dispensors of the mysteries of God* [2]. And in another place, alluding to the doctrines of the Gospel, great, says he, *is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh; justified in the spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory* [3]. Again, speaking of the Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, he calls them, *the revelation of the mystery*, which was kept secret since the world began [4]. I could mention several other places, where *the mysteries of God*, or of *his will*, or of *the Gospel*, are applied by Christ himself, to denote the doctrines taught by the Gospel. And surely a divine faculty of expounding the mysteries of God, which run through both the Testaments, and constitute the noblest and most sublime parts of each, must have been one of the most usefull and important of those miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have been indulged to those primitive ages. Since *the mysteries of God* then, as they are mentioned by *Irenæus*, must be understood to refer to the same mysteries, which are affirmed by Christ and his Apostles, to be reveled to us in the

[1] Δῶρον τὸ μέγιστον ἐπὶ τοῖς θεοῖς ἔχει λαβὼν, καὶ μοῖραν παγκράτην ἐρανοῦν, ἐρμενεύς εἶναι τῶν τῷ Θεῷ λόγων πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, συνιέναι τὰ Θεῷ, ὡς Θεῷ λαλῶντι, καὶ διηγεῖσθαι ἀνθρώποις, ὡς ἀκούσασιν αὐ-

θρώποι. Vid. Greg. Thaum. Orat. Parg. gyr. in Orig. p. 73. D.

[2] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

[3] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

[4] Rom. xvi. 15.

Holy Scriptures, the gift of expounding them cannot possibly signify any thing else, than the gift of expounding the most abstruse and difficult passages of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament.

This point being thus settled, it opens my way to the defence of another, which I had affirmed in consequence of it; that *Justin Martyr* lays claim to this gift of expounding the Scriptures, as indulged to him in an extraordinary manner, by the special grace of God. In proof of this, I have alledged three several passages from *Justin* himself, which I took to be strong and expresse to my point, and which had led several learned men before me into the same opinion. But with these more learned Doctors, my three testimonies from *Justin* are nothing at all to the purpose, nor imply the least claim to any extraordinary gift; they insist, that I wholly mistake the matter, and through my ignorance of the proper sense of the words, imagine them to signify something divine and supernatural, when they signify nothing more than the *ordinary grace of God*, and the *ordinary assistance of the Spirit*, common, as they say, to all believers, and what every good Christian was intituled to as well as *Justin* [1].

And here indeed I must confess the ignorance, with which I am charged by them of the proper sense of these expressions, *the ordinary grace*, and *the ordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost*. They are used, I know, frequently among Christians, but chiefly by that sort, who know not what they mean, or rather mean nothing at all by them. But when Doctors of Divinity apply them, in the way of proof or argument, they ought surely to define the precise meaning of them, or otherwise, we cannot judge of the propriety, of what they pretend to deduce

[1] D. p. 62. Ch. 131.

infer from them. I looked therefore into Dr. *Dodwell's* book, to discover, as well as I was able, in what sense I might suppose him to have applied these phrases; but instead of any satisfaction, I found nothing there but perplexity and confusion. He says, "that the word χάρις or grace is never used to describe a supernatural gift, but known to mean that ordinary cooperation of the Holy Spirit with our best endeavours, which is common to all believers; yet in the next words he treats it as having no meaning at all, but as a common way of speaking, which pious persons accustom themselves to, of ascribing every good thing, which they possess, to the grace of God: and so *Justin*, he says, when he speaks of his knowledge of the Scriptures, as wholly obtained by grace, produces such interpretations of them as appear to have been drawn from his reason: yet in contradiction to all this, he declares at the same time, that the assistance of the Spirit, being a power added to our nature, may therefore in some sense be called *supernatural* [1]."

Dr. *Church* is just as confused, as his partner, in his account also of this *ordinary grace*: he reasons upon it through a page or two, without giving us any hint of what he means by it, and without knowing it, I dare say, himself. The sole explication which he attempts of it is, *that in general it is necessary to open men's understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures, and embrace the truths of the Gospel contained therein, but implies nothing infallible, or miraculous, or any thing more than what any one might attain by his own power* [2], *and enjoy if he would*. Now the only idea, which I can form of the meaning which these Doctors would have us give to their phrase, *of ordinary grace*, is, that we should take it for a principle, neither absolutely natural,

[1] *Dod.* p. 62, 3.[2] *Ch.* p. 131.

nor supernatural, but of a mixed kind between both, and partaking alike of each: for under that character, it would be of excellent use in Theological controversies, where the disputants might make something or nothing of it, just as their argument may require; might advance it to supernatural, when it wanted any help of that sort, or when it demanded the contrary, might depress it to the state of a mere human faculty. Being thus prepared and enlightened by the instruction of these Doctors for a right interpretation of the passages alledged from *Justin*, I now procede to a particular review and examination of them.

On the first of these passages, Dr. *Dodwell* observes, that I have not cited the whole, but referred to it onely, for which reason he thought it necessary to translate the whole at large, which he has accordingly performed in the following words; “ I will endeavour, says *Justin*, in his conference with a Jew, “ to explain to you the Scriptures, without laboring to shew “ merely any artificial ornament of language; for I have no “ talent of that sort, but grace onely is given to me of God, “ to understand the Scriptures, of which grace I will pray, “ that all may be freely and fully partakers, that I may not for “ this, be liable to judgement, in that dispensation of it which “ God the Creator of all things will exercise by my Lord Jesus “ Christ [1].”

Now in this passage *Justin* declares, that in the interpretations of Scripture, which he was going to lay before the Jew, he had no power or faculty of adorning them by any artfull or elegant composition of words, *but that grace alone was given to him by God, to understand his Scriptures.* And here I shall once more affirm; that this is the exprefs claim of an extraordina-

[1] Dod. p. 60.

ry gift, and that the context also, from which our Doctors labor to draw a contrary sense, clearly confirms mine. They insist on the other hand, that *Justin* had not the least thought of claiming any extraordinary endowment in this place, or any thing more, than such a knowledge of the Scriptures, as every good Christian might acquire by his own strength as well as *Justin*: for he was not obliged *to pray*, says Dr. *Dodwell*, that all might be inspired, if he had spoken of his own proficiency in the Scriptures in that sense, but he thought himself bound *to pray*, that all might be favored with the knowledge of those sacred writings [1]. But the most surprizing circumstance in this case is, how the notion of *Justin's praying*, as the translation here makes him to do, could enter into the Doctor's head: or how it was possible, for any man, who has the least tincture of Greek, to translate the word *παρακαλῶ*, by *I will pray*. A verb, which implies no sort of reference or allusion whatsoever to prayer, or to any act or office, which can be addressed to God, but to man only, in the sense of exhorting, admonishing, and entreating, &c. but besides this blunder; which is of the grossest kind, he makes a second also, and that no slight one, in the same verb, by giving it the sense of a future time, when it absolutely indicates the present. Dr. *Church* indeed has rightly translated the verb, by *I exhort and beseech all*, to become partakers, &c. but the turn which he gives to the whole, and the inference which he draws from it, is the same with his Partner's, weak and false. They both reason upon it in the same manner; the one, that *Justin* could not have prayed; the other, that he could not have exhorted the Jews, with whom he was discoursing to partake of a gift, which they could not acquire by any endeavours of their own: for to exhort a man to ac-

[1] Dod. p. 60.

quire what is not in his power, is a flagrant insult upon him [1]. But *Justin's* exhortation carries no absurdity of that sort in it, but confirms the sense, which I have given of his claming here, a divine and extraordinary gift: to which he immediately adds, of which grace, thus given to me, I exhort you all, without reward or envy, to become partakers, that I may not be found liable to punishment in the day of judgement. Where the exhortation has no sort of reference to the acquisition of any gift, either ordinary or extraordinary, nor any other meaning than to move them to take the benefit of that gift, which was given peculiarly to *Justin*, by attending to those interpretations, which he was offering to them, and embracing that true sense of the scriptures, which he was now qualified to teach them. For on what other account could he be apprehensive of any punishment from God at the last day, but for the neglect of imparting and communicating to others the benefit of that extraordinary gift, which had been indulged to himself of unfolding and explaining the mysteries of God? of which duty he was now discharging his conscience, and throwing the guilt upon those onely, who refused to pay a proper regard to it.

There are two other testimonies, which I have produced likewise to the same purposes and from this same dialogue, in one of which *Justin* says to the Jew; *Do you think, that I could ever have been able to understand these things from the Scriptures, if by the will of their author, I had not received the grace to understand them* [1]? In the other place, speaking of Christ, as *the sole reveler of the Father to all those, who know him*, he says, *he has revealed to us therefore all those things, which, by his grace, we have understood from the Scriptures* [3]. But to these testimonies our Doctors answer, that *Justin* is not speaking here of himself,

[1] Ch. p. 131.

[2] Di. p. 390.

[3] Di. p. 352.

but of the whole body of *the Christians*. The words *ἡμᾶς* and *ἐλάβομεν* are plural, says Dr. *Church*, and seem plainly to relate to the Christians in general [1]. And Dr. *Dodwell* has taken care to distinguish the plural sense in his translations of them. Yet they might have observed, that one of these same testimonies, begins with a plural verb, which yet cannot admit any other interpretation, than of the singular number, as being addressed onely to the single person of *Trypho*. And this indeed is a common custom with all writers, to use the plural terms *we* and *us*, when they expect to be understood as speaking onely of themselves. Dr. *Dodwell* himself will supply us with many instances of it. Speaking of my opinion, he says, it appears to us to be a dangerous error. And in several places we find him saying; if *we* were disposed to make reprisals; if *we* interpret strictly; this might strongly be urged *on our side*, &c. [2]. If I had a mind therefore to trifle here, as these Doctors do, I might contend that Doctor *Dodwell* could not be the author of this book, but the secretary onely of some little Synod, who jointly compiled it, for the plural expressions which he so frequently uses; *it appears to us*, &c. are the true synodical stile, and cannot be applied to a single person; were I disposed therefore, I say, to cavil and divert the reader from the proper subject, I should not be more impertinent than these Doctors have actually been; for as it is nothing to my purpose, whether Dr. *Dodwell*'s book was written by himself or with the assistance of friends, the matter of it being what alone I am concerned with; so it is not more to the purpose of these Doctors, whether *Justin* speaks here onely of himself, or of a number of Christians: for if he affirms either of himself or of all, that they were inspired by God with the right interpretation of his

[1] Ch. p. 132.

[2] Dod. p. 4, 30. 41.

Scriptures, that is the whole, which I contend for: and that he actually does affirm it, will appear, I think, unquæstionably to every man unprejudiced, who considers the joint force of the three testimonies, which I have produced in the proof of it: and yet *Justin* is not talking of any common or ordinary points of the Scriptures, but of the most abstruse and recondite passages of the Old Testament, in which, as in a veil, the chief evidences of the Messiah were supposed to have been wrapped up. The same testimonies, as I have already hinted, have ever been understood in the same sense, which I have given to them, by all men of learning, who have any esteem for the Antient Fathers; and especially by those, who were the most eminently acquainted with the principles and monuments of primitive antiquity." Thus the learned *Halloix*, in his *Life of Justin*, affirms; that in his Dialogue with *Trypho* he several times declares, " that the gift of understanding the Scriptures, " was conferred upon him in a divine or extraordinary manner; " and that so great and beneficial a talent, intrusted to his " hands, made him extremely solicitous, lest it should prove " unfruitfull, and be kept up by him as an useless and hidden " treasure [1]." Mr. *Tillemont* also, who, of all men, has published the most exact and voluminous collection, of the writings, the doctrines, the characters, and the lives of those primitive Fathers, observes, " that of all the extraordinary graces, " which the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Church in those " times, there were few so considerable, as that of *understand-* " *ing* the Scriptures, which was communicated by singular fa- " vor to *Justin* [2].

This then will appear at last to be the genuin case of the gift of expounding the Scriptures or the mysteries of God. It is ex-

[1] 4. p. 23. not.

[2] p. 2, 358, 380.

preſſy attested by *Irenæus*; was ever reckoned among the extraordinary gifts of thoſe times; was claimed eſpecially by *Juſtin*; and is affirmed to have been largely poured out upon *Origen*. Yet the moſt learned and inquiſitive of our Proteſtant Divines, and even thoſe, who pay the greateſt reverence to the characters of the Fathers, are forced to confeſs, that they cannot diſcover the leaſt inſtance or trace of any ſuch gift in the writings of thoſe Fathers; but on the contrary, that their interpretations of the Scriptures are generally ſo unnatural, and extravagant, that inſtead of being the dictates of a divine inſpiration, they ſeem to be the effects rather of an unſound mind and diſordered reaſon. Wherefore the falſehood and impoſture ſo manifeſtly diſcovered, and even confeſſed in the claim of this particular gift, muſt needs leave a ſtrong ſuſpicion, upon the authority of all the reſt. Yet theſe ſhall be heard likewiſe for themſelves, nor be implicitly condemned, till they have had a fair trial. For which purpoſe I ſhall procede to review two or three of the principal of them, and examine, what pretenſions they can juſtly make to that credit and belief which they ſtill generally obtain among Chriſtians.

The next miracle, which I propoſe to examine is, that of *raiſing the dead*. Which *Irenæus* expreſſy affirms, *to have been frequently performed in thoſe days on neceſſary occaſions, by great faſting and the joint ſupplications of the Church of the place: and that the perſons he raiſed had lived afterwards among them many years* [1]. Now on this article, as Dr. *Dodwell* rightly obſerves, *there is great ſtreſs to be laid* [2]. I ſhall lay as much upon it therefore, as he pleaſes; ſhall conſent, that the iſſue of the whole may reſt upon it, and that the proofs and evidence of this capital Miracle, may determine the fate of all the reſt.

[1] p. 186. 88.

[2] Dod. p. 78.

By way of objection to this testimony of *Irenæus*, I had observed, " that if a Miracle of so surprising a nature had been *so frequent*, as he declares it to have been; performed, as it were in every parish, or place, where there was a Christian Church, it must have made a great noise in the world, and been celebrated not onely by the Primitive Fathers, but by all Historians or Writers of those times [1]." But here they cavil a while at the frequency, which I ascribe to this Miracle: *To suppose this Miracle*, says Dr. Church, *to have been common in every place, where there was a Society of Christians, or a Church, is a mistake grounded on a false construction of Irenæus's words* [2]. Which, tho' confidently affirmed and repeated by him, is utterly false. *Irenæus* attests it, as we have seen, to have been frequently performed on necessary occasions, by the fasting and joint supplication of the Church of the place: which words, as they limit it to no particular place, so they necessarily imply it to have been common alike to all places, wherever there was a proper occasion, and a Society of Christians to pray for it; which is the very sense, that I had given to them. And from the same words, Mr. Dodwell, the Father, has inferred, that the instances of this Miracle were more numerous in this age, than in that even of the Apostles: *They raised the dead*, says he, *in the Apostolic Churches, yet we have few examples of it, in the genuine acts of the Apostles; but in Irenæus's days, they raised not a few, but very often* [3].

As to the other part of my objection, that so wonderfull a fact, if it had been frequent, must have made great noise in the world, and been celebrated by all writers, they treat it with much contempt. " Who should be expected to record these instances?" says Dr. Dodwell, the Heathen Historians would

[1] Free Inq. p. 72.

[2] Ch. p. 189.

[3] p. 42.

" not,

“ not, if they had known and believed them, for it would
 “ have been an act of self-condemnation in them; neither
 “ would Christian Historians, if such there had been; for
 “ this would have been drawing down unnecessarily perle-
 “ cution upon those particular persons; when a general asser-
 “ tion of the facts would serve their argument as well [1].”
 “ By what Historians, says Dr. *Church*, would this gentleman
 “ have had these Miracles celebrated? By Jewish or Heathen
 “ ones? this was not to be expected. Could they have dis-
 “ proved such accounts, no doubt but they would have been
 “ glad to do it, and we may depend upon it, that this had
 “ been done; but to celebrate them, was what they were lit-
 “ tle inclined to, if indeed they gave themselves any trouble to
 “ examine them [2]:” Another of my Answerers argues also
 in the same strain: “ ’Tis not probable, says he, a Heathen
 “ Historian would have related such a fact, had he known it.
 “ ’Tis equally improbable, he should know it: seeing the
 “ Christians knew, with whom they had to do; and that, had
 “ such an instance been made publick, they would not long
 “ have enjoyed him, who had been given back to their prayers
 “ [3].” The reader surely must think it strange, that men who
 know any thing of human nature, or the history of past ages,
 can reason at so wild a rate, or imagine, that an Heathen, tho’
 he had seen the fact performed before his eyes, could resolve to
 stifle the impression, and persist to deny the reality of it. Had
 the Heathens no curiosity, no love of truth, no desire of know-
 ledge in points of the highest importance? Yes; they possessed those
 principles in a very great degree. The Superstition and Idola-
 try of the popular religions, had long been condemned by all
 the wise and virtuous among them, who were perpetually

[1] Dod. p. 78.

[2] Ch. p. 186.

[3] p. 114.

searching after a more perfect and excellent rule. These searches gave birth to various sects of Philosophy; some of which maintained the existence, the unity, and providence of God; the immortality of the soul, &c. Others also taught the same doctrines, but as probable only, not certain: while some still doubted, and even flatly denied them all. On these points therefore, continual disputes and arguments were carried on, in all the politer parts of the Heathen world; and especially in Greece and Rome; so that, in such circumstances, the sight of a person raised from the dead, offered in such a manner, as carried with it a demonstration of its reality, must have been, of all spectacles, the most desirable to a sober and inquisitive Heathen; as it would have settled all their disputes, and corrected their philosophy at once; and convinced them all, not only of the certainty of a resurrection; but of that very sort, which all philosophy had ever held to be impossible, *the resurrection of the body.*

Mr. Millar, in his *History of the propagation of Christianity*, a work particularly recommended to his readers by Dr. Church, observes, “ that by the good providence of God, philosophy “ began to flourish among the Heathens, a little before the “ coming of Christ, which was of great use to refine the minds “ of men, and render them capable of receiving the celestial “ and sublime truths of the Gospel [1].” But these narrow minded Answerers, whose thoughts never reach farther, than the contrivance of an expedient, how to clear themselves of a present difficulty, insist; that an Heathen, tho’ he had been an eye-witness of so striking a fact, and intirely convinced of its truth; yet, in spite of all conviction, would have been insensible of the force of it, and incited only, to persecute and de-

[1] Millar's Hist. p. 1.

stroy the particular actors in it. Nay, their whole representation of the matter tends to persuade us, that if the Heathens had been invited to see the Miracle performed in their presence, they would have knocked the man down, as soon as he began to rise, and smothered him again in his grave, before he was got out of it.

Such nonsense as this, which they would put upon us here for argument, can hardly fail of persuading every intelligent reader, that a claim of Miracles, which wants such a defence, must necessarily be fictitious: yet they proceed with great complacency, to confirm it by several curious observations. “ We
“ may observe in the next place, says Dr. *Church*, that this
“ Miracle differs from others in one thing; that there is no oc-
“ casion for it’s being openly performed. Because Infidels,
“ who never had an opportunity of seeing it, yet if they have
“ sufficient evidence of it, ought in reason and conscience to
“ believe it. And sufficient evidence of it’s reality may easily
“ be had, even tho’ no one witness was present at the working
“ of it [1].”

This observation indeed is new and purely his own; never heard, I dare say before, or thought of by any man, but is so contrary to all the notions, which History and experience have taught us on this article, that I cannot help wondering, whence it could come into this Doctor’s head, or what facts and instances he can have to ground it upon. If the end of all Miracles be to create faith and conviction: and if when performed before our eyes, they impart a stronger conviction, than an hundred witnesses can give, who had not seen them, it cannot be the peculiar difference of the greatest of all Miracles, that it need be reported onely, not seen; and that, in distinction from all

[1] Ch. p. 187.

other Miracles, it should require our belief, upon the testimony even of those, who themselves had not seen it: for surely, the more uncommon and surprizing the nature of any miracle may be, the more it will always want to be openly performed.

In the history of the Gospel we find the Miracles of this kind, which were wrought by our Lord, to have been performed by him, in broad day light and the midst of crouds. Thus in the City of *Nain*, the widow's son was raised from the bier, as they were carrying him to his grave, *in the sight of much people: so that the rumor of it went forth through all Judæa, and all the region round about* [1]. The daughter also of the Ruler was raised by him in such a manner, *that the fame of it is said to have gone abroad into all the land* [2]. And in raising *Lazarus*, *Jesus lift up his eyes, and said; Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I knew, that thou always bearest me; but because of the people, which stand by, I said it, that they may believe, that thou hast sent me. Upon which many of the Jews, who had seen the things, which he did, believed on him* [3].

What was it then, that could possibly suggest so crude an observation to our Doctor? Why nothing, but the character of this very primitive Miracle, which we are considering as it is stated and described by *Irenæus*. With this indeed his observation perfectly tallies: for this, we must own, was of a kind, which had no occasion to be openly performed: the very report of it rendered it suspected, and the production of it would have blasted it. For as they themselves allow, it was not designed for the public, nor the conversion of the Heathens; but to be performed onely in the dark, among a few of the faithfull; on certain necessary occasions; which are neither spe-

[1] Luke vii. 17.

[2] Matt. ix. 26.

[3] John xi. 41, &c.

cified, nor discoverable to any man. All which is so palpably contradictory to the character and effects of this particular Miracle, that it can hardly fail of convincing every reader, that the original claim of it was false; and the instances of it, which are said to have subsisted among the Christians, mere fictions, contrived by the crafty and political, to feed the credulity of the pious and the simple.

But in what ever light we consider the account of this Miracle, as it is given by *Irenæus* and defended by these Advocates, it will appear to be nothing else but a ridiculous and contemptible tale. For since the conversion of the Heathens, the most important of all ends, and to which all other Miracles were chiefly applied, was not intended by it, what *necessary occasion* could there be for it, among the private and dispersed Societies of the Christians, or what cause of weight enough, to engage a whole Church in a course of fasting and prayer for the performance of it? The Christians of this age, instead of being fond of life, were longing to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; were thirsting after an immortality of glory, and offering themselves forwardly to Martyrdom, that they might obtain it a few years the sooner: they wanted no Miracle for the confirmation of their faith; the firmness of which was the ground of God's favor to them, and of their own fortitude, in suffering those persecutions, to which it exposed them: they were persuaded of the resurrection of the body, and to pray therefore, to see an instance of it, would not have been an act of piety, but of levity. And to suppose, that a whole Congregation should be induced to fast and pray, that a departed friend, or parent, or husband should be restored to life, to relieve the present grief, or gratify the fond affection of particular persons or families, cannot be thought a *necessary occasion*, or an end worthy of the interposition of God. Then

Then as to the persons who were so raised; they could not possibly receive any imaginable benefit from a favor so extraordinary: for after they had been delivered from all the troubles of this life, it must have been an occasion of misery and mortification to them, to have been thrown back again into the midst of them: and when they were arrived at their journey's end, and within the reach of that bliss, which had been the subject of all their hopes, and the end of all their wishes, to be thrust back from it again at the very moment of fruition, must have been a disappointment, of all others, the most grievous to a pious soul. And for this, what amends could they receive in being restored to so wretched a life, as they must have led from the time of their resurrection; sculking perpetually, and hiding themselves among a few friends? since if they happened to be discovered, they were sure, as these Answerers tell us, of being destroyed by the Heathens.

But after all these evasive expedients and senseless conceits of these Doctors, it is not possible, from the nature of the thing, that this Miracle could have been concealed; or that the persons, who were raised, and lived many years after it, could live undiscovered by the Heathens. In every place, where there was a society of Christians, whether in a City, Town, or village, the Heathens were by far the majority, and surrounded them on all sides; so that a Christian could not die, or be carried at least to his grave, without being observed by some or other of his Heathen neighbours; much less could he be called again into life, without astonishing all those, who had ever seen or known him before, and whose astonishment would presently have been communicated through the whole neighbourhood: and as the same miracle is affirmed to have been worked indifferently in every place, where there was a necessary occasion,

and a number of Christians, to fast and pray for it; so the fame of it must needs have reached, as far as the Gospel itself was then spread.

It is allowed however in the present case, that the Heathens knew nothing at all of the matter, but constantly held the fact itself to be impossible, which I have urged as a clear proof, that they had never seen or heard of it's being performed, except in such a manner, as carried with it a suspicion of fraud and collusion. But *this prepossession*, says Dr. Dodwell, *was the very thing, which prevented their attending to it at all; for they could not think, that they needed particular circumstances to disprove that, which they thought impossible in itself* [1]: which, like all the rest of his remarks on this article, has neither sense nor force in it. For let us suppose the claim of this same Miracle to be made by any Christians in our own days; in which there is not a single Protestant of any judgement, who is not as strongly prepossessed, as the Heathens antiently were, with a persuasion, that no mortal now living, nor any number of them, can possibly raise the dead. Yet if he was well informed, that it had been done by any particular congregation, and upon an invitation to see it done by the same, should there receive a full conviction of it's reality, by seeing a person actually raised from the grave before his own eyes; he could not help adoring the power and majesty of God, in a work of so wonderfull a nature, and revering at the same time the sanctity of those men and their prayers, by which God was moved to interpose, in so extraordinary a manner. And this the Heathens themselves would certainly have done in the same case; a Miracle of this sort offered to the conviction of their senses, would have stifled all their prejudices at once, how strong soever they had been: for

[1] Dod. p. 79.

human nature was ever the same in all ages; and it was impossible, for men of judgement, to withstand the clear evidence of their senses in antient times, as it is, for men of the same character, to reject it in the present.

But I had offered one objection to the reality of this miraculous gift, which, of itself, I take to be decisive, and a sure proof, that the claim of it must have been false. The objection is this; "that in the very same age, in which *Irenæus* declares "this Miracle to be often performed, and that persons so raised "had lived afterwards among them many years; yet when *Autolytus*, an eminent Heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, "Bishop of Antioch, to shew him but one, who had been so "raised among the Christians, with a promise of turning "Christian upon it himself, *Theophilus* discovered by his answer, that he was not able to give him that satisfaction [1]." Dr. *Dodwell* allows this objection to be plausible, and the most to my purpose of any in my whole performance [2]. And in order to refute, or at least to weaken it's force, recurs to his usual expedient of affirming, that *I have mistaken the answer of Theophilus, given a wrong turn to it, and misrepresented it in several points*; to confirm which, he gives us a translation of the whole, cooked up to his own sense in the following words.

"Farther, you deny the resurrection of the dead. For you "say, shew me even one raised from the dead, on the sight "of which I will believe. But in the first place, what great "thing is it, if you do believe, what you see yourself. Farther, if you can believe, that *Hercules*, that burned himself, "does still live; and that *Esculapius*, that was killed by lightning, was raised again; can you disbelieve the things, which "are reported to you by God himself? In like manner, if I

[1] Free Inq. p. 70.

[2] Dod. p. 79.

"should

“ should shew you one raised from the dead and still living,
 “ even this you would disbelieve, &c. [1].”

From this passage, as it is here translated, the Doctor attempts to shew, that *Autolycus's* demand was, not to see a person, *who had been raised from the dead among the Christians*, but to see one actually raised upon the spot, and in his presence, by *Theophilus* himself; and that the onely point, which he was here speaking of was *the general resurrection of the dead; which he at present denied, but owned he would believe, if he could see an instance of it* [2]. An interpretation wholly forein to the purpose, and utterly inconsistent with the genuin sense of the words. For the first part of them, which chiefly relate to the point in question, should be rendered thus: *But farther; you deny, that the dead are now raised; for you say, shew me but one, who has been raised from the dead, and by seeing him I will become a believer.*

This is the indisputable sense of the words, and exactly conformable to the representation, that I had given of them: in which we see a plain reference to a report, which was then current and affirmed by all the Christians of those days, that there were several persons actually living among them, who had been raised from the dead. This was the fact, which *Autolycus* could not believe, and on which therefore he required satisfaction from his friend *Theophilus*, by seeing an instance produced before him of any one who had been so raised: in which *Theophilus*, how desirous soever he might be, to gratify him, was not able to do it. Every school-boy would readily tell us, that *νεκρὸς ἐγείρεσθαι* [3], denotes an action of the pre-

[1] Dod. p. 83.

[2] Dod. p. 84.

[3] Our Lord uses the same form of expression, in his answer to the message

sent to him by *John the Baptist*, where among the other proofs of his Messiahship he adds, *νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται*, the dead are raised up. Matt. xi. 3.

sent time, *ἐγερθεῖς* one, that is past. Yet our Doctor to support this paultry shift, of putting *the general resurrection* upon us, as the sole point here referred to, has quite reversed the matter; and of the two capital words, on which the force of the whole sentence turns, has given a future sense to that, which indicates the present, and a present, to that which indicates the past; and to say the truth, his whole translation betrays either such a bigotry, as will not allow any sense, in any words, which does not tally with his own prejudices; or such an ignorance of the Greek, as is incapable of discovering what their sense really is.

But what surprizes me the more in this translation, is, that it flatly contradicts his Father's exposition of it, from which, as being the same with my own, I hoped to have gained some little authority with him in an argument, which he owns to be plausible. In other instances, we have found him stiffly adhering to the interpretations of his Father, and strenuously defending them, tho' manifestly erroneous; which I could not help imputing to his piety, and zealous regard for the reputation of a learned and worthy parent. But what shall we say to him now, when we find him rejecting his Father's sense, and declaring it to be *wrong*, tho' it be demonstrably right, and what he ought to have embraced, if it had come from an adversary. His Father perfectly knew, that the participle, *ἐγερθεῖς*, could not possibly mean any thing else, in it's proper and grammatical sense, but a person, who had *already been raised from the dead*: but the son affirms it to signify one, who was about to be raised, or in the act of rising, which shews; that he had nothing of that filial tenderness, with which I had imagined him to have been indued, but the true spirit of a controversial zealot, whom neither the authority of Grammar, nor

of a Father, nor of truth itself can move, whenever they thwart the System, which he had undertaken to defend.

But that *Autolycus's* demand wholly relates to a person, who *had been actually raised*, is proved beyond all doubt by *Theophilus's* answer to it, as it stands here translated, even by the Doctor himself: *for if I should shew you one, says he, raised from the dead, and still living, even this you would disbelieve*: which directly corresponds with that sense of it, and cannot possibly do so with any other. As to the character of *Autolycus*, we know nothing more of it, than what may be collected from the writings of *Theophilus*, who addressed three books to him, containing an Apology for the Christian religion, drawn with a particular view of satisfying *Autolycus's* scruples, and making him also a convert, as *Theophilus* himself was. From his familiarity and friendship with this eminent Bishop, we may justly infer, that he was of a candid, reasonable, and inquisitive disposition; a contemner of the Idolatry and Superstition of the public religion, and desirous to embrace a more rational worship if he could any where find it. In these circumstances Christianity was proposed to him, to which he seems to have been inclined, but the miraculous pretensions of the Christians appear to have shocked him, and infused certain scruples, which were first to be removed. He could not believe, that they had the power, of which they boasted, of *raising the dead*; or that there were any persons then living among them, who had been so raised: this was the point, in which he required to be satisfied; and if *Theophilus* would shew him an instance of any such person, so as to convince him of the reality of the fact, he promised to turn Christian upon it [1].

The

[1] Dr. Dodwell, with his usual obstinacy, flatly denies, that *Autolycus* makes any such

The demand was certainly reasonable, and suitable to the character of a discreet, and sober inquirer. And if the claim of this Miracle had been true, as it is affirmed by *Irenæus*, it could not have been difficult to have produced one; nor could there have been an occasion more worthy of it, than the conversion of an illustrious and virtuous Heathen, who sought and offered to become a believer on that very condition. Nor can we imagine, but that *Theophilus*, who was taking so much pains to convert him, and addressed three books to him with that very view, would not have been glad to have gratified him in this request, if it had been in his power, and so procured his conversion at once. For it is very remarkable, that *Theophilus* does not excuse himself from giving the satisfaction, which was desired by alledging, what these modern Advocates take it into their heads to suppose, that the persons who had been raised some years before were now dead again the second time; nor does he plead any difficulty in the production of an instance, on account of their being all dispersed and removed to any distant countries; and much less, would he have said, what our ingenious Doctors have contrived to say on this occasion, that the production of such a person, would have *exposed him onely to persecution, or to have been knocked on the head upon the spot*: but he insists onely, that if he should produce one, *Autolycus* would not still believe it. Which shews, that all their pretended instances of this great Miracle were of a kind, that could not stand the test of a fair examination, nor give any

such promise, in the passage above recited; yet the words themselves are express, *ἵνα ἰδὼν πιστεύσω*, and cannot possibly be interpreted to any other sense: and we find the same verb *πιστεύω*, continually applied in the New Testament, in the same man-

ner, to denote a man's becoming a believer, not of this or that particular point, but of the whole faith of Ch'ist. *Mark* xv. 32. *ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν*. *Matt.* xxvii. 42. *John* ix. 38. *ὁ δ' ἰφην, πιστεύω*, &c.

satisfactory proof of their reality, to a candid and impartial inquirer. And this opinion will be the more clearly confirmed to us, by considering the shuffling, futile, and inconsistent account, which these Doctors have given of the conduct of *Theophilus*.

Dr. *Dodwell*, who by a gross mistake contends, that *Autolycus's* demand was, to see the Miracle of raising the dead, performed before his eyes by *Theophilus* himself, tells us, “ that to
 “ ask, why such a power was not granted on this occasion,
 “ for the satisfaction of *Autolycus*, is entering into the counsels
 “ of Providence, who might have good reasons for not vouch-
 “ safing this method of conviction to him. That after the
 “ other evidence, which had been offered to him, it might
 “ not be indeed proper to offer a Miracle for his conviction.
 “ But that if such a Miracle had been wrought in his presence,
 “ he would have found some way or other to evade it; would
 “ probably have suggested, that there was a confederacy, be-
 “ tween them, or have imputed the recovery to the force of
 “ art, or offered some such evasion, as hardened infidelity can
 “ always suggest [1].”

Dr. *Church* observes, “ that Mr. *Dodwell*, the Father,
 “ thought this answer of *Theophilus* a proof, not onely that
 “ this Miracle had then ceased, or at least was no longer
 “ common; but also, that those, who had been raised, had,
 “ in the space of forty years, been dead again. Which sup-
 “ positions answer the difficulty, and are neither of them dis-
 “ proved by me. However, it must be owned, adds he, that
 “ *Autolycus's* demand was unreasonable, especially, if the case
 “ be, as Mr. *Dodwell's* son has endeavoured to shew, that *Au-*
 “ *tolycus's* demand was to see one raised from the dead in his

[1] Dod. p. 78. 84.

“ fight, and not one, who had been raised before; which
 “ would have been little or no satisfaction to him. By this
 “ way of considering the passage, the foundation of the ob-
 “ jection is removed. On the whole therefore, tho’ *Theophilus*
 “ did not produce any instance of this Miracle, to gratify the
 “ vain humour, and idle curiosity of his Antagonist; this
 “ cannot set aside the positive and express testimony of *Ire-*
 “ *naus* [1].”

Such is their way of refuting a positive fact; by a number of suppositions, either wholly vain and fancifull, or grounded on their own blunders and ignorance of the subject, which they are treating. The fact however is incontestable. *Autolycus* demanded to see a person, who had been raised from the dead; could not be gratified in that demand, for which our Doctors think it a sufficient apology, to say; “ that Providence might
 “ judge it improper, to give that conviction, to *his vain hu-*
 “ *mour and idle curiosity*; that there was evidence enough of an-
 “ other sort, which ought to have convinced him; and if a Mi-
 “ racle had been wrought for the purpose in his presence, he
 “ was such an *hardned Infidel*, that it would have made no im-
 “ pression upon him.” Whereas the whole, which we can fairly collect, either of the nature of the man, or of his demand, is; that he was a candid inquirer after truth, and ready to embrace it, where-ever it could be found; and that his demand, instead of being the effect of any idle humor or curiosity, was the result of a serious and deliberate intention, to become a convert to Christianity, if he could be convinced onely of this single point, *that there were any persons then living among the Christians, who had been raised from the dead.* And the sole inference, which we can reasonably draw from the inability of

this Bishop to give him that satisfaction is ; that there were no such persons then in being : and consequently, no such miraculous gift then subsisting in the Church, how positively soever it may be attested by *Irenæus* ; *Theophilus* lived in the same age with him ; and tho' we should suppose him to have been somewhat younger, and to have lived some years longer, yet if the Miracle itself had ceased, after it had been exerted for some short time, according to the testimony of *Irenæus* ; or if the persons, who had been raised in the days of *Irenæus*, were all dead again before *Theophilus* wrote, it is certain, that he would have mentioned either the one, or the other to excuse his want of power to satisfy his friend. But he had no such excuse to make ; and the conceits of this sort, to which our modern Advocates now recur, are but the vain expedients of men, laboring to prop up a lame cause, unable to support itself, by the help of fictitious circumstances, of their own invention.

Besides all these various improbabilities, which appear upon the very face of this miraculous gift ; I have observed, that it stands upon the single testimony of *Irenæus* [1], and is not mentioned or referred to in any manner, by any of the succeeding Fathers, through the three first centuries : which circumstance alone seems to be sufficient to blast it's credit. For it is scarce possible to conceive, if this gift had really subsisted in *Irenæus*'s days, and in so full a measure, as he affirms it to have done, that all the later writers, and the Apologists especially, could have omitted the mention of it, or suffered the memory of a fact, so reputable to their cause, to have been lost and buried in oblivion, when they make it their business to display, in the strongest terms, every other miraculous power, which they pretend to have been indulged to them from hea-

[1] Free Inq. p. 188.

ven; of casting out Devils, curing diseases, prophetic trances, &c. This, I say, might reasonably incline us to suspect, that this attempt of some of the more crafty Christians, to assert and keep up a pretension to this primary Miracle, having been found vain and impracticable, and without any other effect, than of drawing the greater derision and contempt upon them from the Heathens, they prudently chose to drop and bury it for the future in utter silence.

I have further observed, that in the earlier times also, after the days of the Apostles, there is no intimation of the subsistence of this Miracle in the Church, except in a single instance, found in the writings of *Papias*, which *Eusebius*, who slightly touches it, seems to rank among the other fabulous stories, recorded by that weak man [1]. But here my Answerers flatly contradict me; “ *Eusebius*, says Dr. Church, cites *Papias* as saying, “ that this Miracle had been done in his time. Neither can I “ discern the least doubt or distrust in the Historian, tho’ this “ Gentleman is pleased to say, *he seems to rank it among the other “ fabulous stories, delivered by that weak man.* And however weak “ *Papias* was, he may be a good witness of such a fact: no “ wisdom was here required [2].” Another of them says, it is plain, that *Eusebius* was not diffident about the Miracle of raising the dead, related by *Papias*, nor ranks it among fables [3]. I shall employ a few words therefore to clear up the state of this fact.

Eusebius, in the chapter of his History here referred to, sets forth the particular character of *Papias* and his writings, of whom he says; “ that he was a diligent collector of unwritten “ traditions, which he gathered chiefly from those Elders, “ who had conversed with the Apostles; especially from *John*,

[1] p. 72.

[2] Ch. p. 185.

[3] p. 46.

“ *the Presbyter, and Aristion*: and besides these, he relates some
 “ other wonderfull things on the authority of tradition; par-
 “ ticularly a story reported to him by the daughters of *Philip*,
 “ of a dead person, who had been raised to life; and another story,
 “ of *Justus*, surnamed *Barsabas*, who happened to drink a cup
 “ of deadly poyson, yet by the grace of God received no harm
 “ from it. After which, he goes on to tell us, how *Papias*,
 “ from the same source of unwritten tradition, had recorded
 “ some strange parables and doctrines of our Lord, and several
 “ other *fabulous tales*: especially that, of a *corporeal and sensual*
 “ *millennium*, in which Christ was to reign with the Saints upon
 “ this earth, for a thousand years after the general resurrection:
 “ which he ascribes to the mistake and blunder of *Papias*,
 “ who grossly and literally interpreted, what the Apostles had
 “ delivered in a typical or mystical sense. For *Papias*, says he,
 “ was of a *very shallow understanding*, as is evident from his writ-
 “ ings; yet the greatest part of the Ecclesiastical Writers or
 “ Fathers, who succeeded him, were led by his authority into
 “ the same opinion, on account of the age of the man, as *Ire-*
 “ *næus* in particular, as well as every other writer, who asserts
 “ the like doctrines [1].”

Now from this account let any unprejudiced man judge,
 whether *Eusebius* can be thought to have laid any sort of stress
 on an *bearsay-story*, as it was recorded by *Papias*, concerning a
 person unknown; who had been raised from the dead: and
 whether he does not put it upon the same rank, with all the
 other *strange parables and tales*, which he mentions to have been
 delivered by the same weak man, and expressly declares to be
fabulous, μυθικώτατα; this at least is certain, and sufficient for my
 purpose; that after the character here given, of the little under-

[1] Euseb. p. 339.

Standings; and great credulity of Papias, no man of judgement will think his testimony of any weight in the present case; or venture to affirm, as Dr. Church has done, that *how weak soever he might be, he may still be a good witness of such a fact*. For all that can be allowed to such a character is, that he may be a *very good believer of an hearsay-story*; but to call him a *good witness* of it, is absurd, and contradictory to the common sense and experience of mankind.

But before I dismiss this instance of *Papias*, I shall just remind the Doctor once more, of what the learned Mr. Millar, his own favorite writer, has said, concerning the credit of his testimony, in a similar case of a questionable fact. "Tho' many of the Antients, says he, have given some ground for this story, yet it flows originally onely from *Papias*, called *Bishop of Hierapolis*, as cited by *Eusebius*, for *Papias's* books are lost. But if they were extant; according to the same *Eusebius*, the Author of them was but, *a person of a mean character; a rude simple and vain man, who believed and reported things upon common tradition, even things, that were μυθώτερα, liker to fables than truths. He was a millenary, and introduced fabulous stories into the Church, which a multitude of writers after him licked up* [1]."

Thus we see, how the character of *Papias* stands between these two Authors, Mr. Millar, and Dr. Church; men of the same principles; of the same reverence for the primitive Fathers; and writers after each other's own heart. Mr. Millar, being led by his argument, to combat the reality of a fact, which was supported chiefly by the testimony of *Papias*, frankly sets forth the true character of the man, as it is represented by *Eusebius*, and shews him, to have been utterly void both of judgement and veracity, and unworthy therefore of any

[1] Millar, p. 28c.

credit. Dr. *Church*, on the other hand, being engaged to defend a system, where the testimony of *Papias* is of some little use to him, resolves at all adventures to hold up his character, and how many lies soever may have been told, and fables invented by him, affirms him to be a *good witness*, even of a fact, which, of all others, is in its own nature, the most surprizing and incredible.

But to return to the Miracle, which we have been examining: it not onely stands, as we have shewn, upon the single testimony of *Irenæus*, but I have shewn also, that this single witness was of a character, on which we cannot reasonably depend for the truth of a report so extraordinary. I have shewn him to be of so credulous, superstitious and enthusiastical a turn of mind, as would dispose him to embrace and assert any fabulous tale, which tended, as he thought, in any manner, to advance the credit of the Gospel, or to confute an Heretic. That he has actually affirmed several facts, doctrines and traditions, as delivered down to him directly from the Apostles, which are allowed even by his advocates, to be absolutely false and groundless: all which I have confirmed by such clear and undeniable instances, as would utterly blast the credit of the most esteemed and eminent writer now living. In short, I have shewn him to be a second *Papias*, whose scholar he was; and by whom, as *Eusebius* tells us, he was *imposed upon, and drawn to believe, and teach those spurious doctrines and traditions*, with which his writings abound, and which his authority continued to impose likewise upon the Fathers, who succeeded him.

To these exceptions urged by me against the credibility of his testimony, our Champions have not attempted to give any particular answer: but since his authority must by all means be supported, or their argument would sink at once, they affirm
still

still with one voice, that *his testimony is superior to all exception*; and they lay it down as an indisputable maxim; *that the positive evidence of a witness, so pious and so sincerely devoted to the Christian cause, must necessarily demand our belief in all Cases, how extraordinary or incredible soever they may be in their own nature*: This is the general answer which they give to all objections of this kind; and on this maxim, as extravagant as it is, the merit of their cause and reasoning is intirely grounded.

And now I cannot help flattering myself, that every sensible and unprejudiced reader will be of the same mind with me, with regard to the claim of this primary Miracle, as it is set forth by the testimony of *Irenæus*. For if a strict and impartial examination can qualify me to form a proper judgement of it; or if I have any ability to distinguish between true and false; probable and improbable; I may safely pronounce, that there is not a grain of truth in it, nor a single circumstance belonging to it, which a *Free Inquirer*, or a *Free Answerer*, if he was sincere, could justly think probable. As to my Antagonists, the impotence of their attempts to confute my argument is a strong confirmation of the truth of it. While they defend these Miracles to be true, their very defences prove them to be false; and while they assume to themselves the title of *Free Answerers*, their answers shew them to be slaves to systems, and listless for the perpetual defence of received and established opinions, whether true or false. Lastly, since this is a point, on which, as Dr. *Doctwell* has observed, *great stress ought to be laid*; I here freely stake the whole merit and credit of my work upon it; and if this Miracle at last should be adjudged to be true, shall quit the field to my adversaries, and own myself unable, to prove any of the rest to be false.

The gift of tongues also, as well as that of raising the dead, stands upon the single testimony of *Irenæus*, without the least notice or mention of it in any succeeding writer through the three first centuries. I have offered several objections to the reality of it, sufficient to expose the falshood of that claim; which is made of it by *Irenæus*, and shall now consider, what my Answerers have offered towards the confutation of those objections. I cannot help observing however in the first place, how ignorant they were of the nature of this particular gift, till they had acquired some little insight into it, from the perusal of my work. Before the publication of my *Free Inquiry*, the Answerers of my Introductory Discourse, affirm it to have been absolutely necessary to the propagation of the Gospel, and without which no success could be expected; and urge that necessity as a sure proof of it's continuance after the days of the Apostles, and consequently, as a confutation of my general argument. And this indeed has ever been the universal sense of all Divines, without exception, from our Archbishops down to our Vicars, as oft as they had occasion to touch upon this subject in their Sermons or other Discourses, of which I could produce many instances, but shall content myself with one for the present.

The late Bishop *Burnet*, speaking of the Romish missions of these later ages, among the remote and barbarous nations, says;
 “ It is so sublime a mystery to think on God, and his attributes
 “ and works: or to think of another state, and the way, that
 “ leads to it; that till God furnishes out a new mission of Apostles, with a measure of those extraordinary gifts, which were
 “ poured out on the great Pentecost, it is not easy to imagine
 “ how the conversion of the Heathen nations should be made.
 “ And since the chief grounds on which we prove the Christian
 “ religion,

“ religion, are taken from the prophecies of the Old Testa-
 “ ment, and their accomplishment in the New—to the Berba-
 “ rians, who know nothing of this, and have no way of in-
 “ forming themselves concerning it, all this proof can signify
 “ nothing.—So that in order to the convincing their under-
 “ standings—I do not see, how we should expect, that they
 “ should yield easily, unless there were a new power of work-
 “ ing Miracles, conferred on those, who labor in it; for what
 “ noise soever their Missionaries make, with their Miracles
 “ in those remote parts, it is plain, that these are all impos-
 “ sibilities: for the most necessary of all Miracles for the conver-
 “ sion of strange nations being *the Gift of tongues*, with which
 “ the Apostles were furnished at first; and since they are all
 “ forced to acknowledge, that this is wanting to them, we
 “ have all possible reason to conclude, that God would not
 “ change his method, or qualify men to work wonders, and
 “ not give them that, which is both the most sensible and most
 “ usefull of all others, towards that end, for which he autho-
 “ rises them [1].”

This, I say, was the established notion and character of this particular *gift of Tongues*, among all our Divines till the publication of *the Free Inquiry*. But since this has taught them, that, how necessary soever this Gift might be, it was either not continued to the Church after the Days of the Apostles, or withdrawn at least within a generation or two after, we now find our Doctors in a quite different tone, from all who wrote before them; and as if the nature of this Miracle had been wholly changed at once, treating it, as of much less use, than any other Miracle, and assigning that, as the very reason, why it was one of the first, which God thought fit to recall.

[1] Bishop Burnet's Pref. to Lactant, p. 12, 13, 14, 15.

“ It might be serviceable, says Dr. *Dodwell*, in the propagation
 “ of the Gospel, yet was the least convincing of any to gain-
 “ sayers--- and could be no proof antecedently to the uncon-
 “ verted. As soon as this use of it ceased, or was attainable
 “ by human means, the supernatural gift itself ceased also,
 “ and therefore ceased the first of any.” “ This gift, says
 Dr. *Church*, would enable them to preach the Gospel to peo-
 ple of different nations, but would not evince the authority
 “ of their mission. If this be allowed, we shall soon discern
 “ the reason, why the gift of tongues might cease before other
 “ Miracles. When once a sufficient number of converts was
 “ made in any country, and instructed in the nature of our
 “ religion, these or at least the principal part of them, were
 “ ordained, and sent to teach their countrymen. And as they
 “ wanted no gift of tongues, to enable them to do this, so we
 “ have no reason to think, that God would continue such a Mi-
 “ racle any longer than was necessary : whereas these very per-
 “ sons might want and did want the assistance of other Mira-
 “ cles then, not onely to confirm the word, but to support them-
 “ selves and others, who were eminent sufferers for the truth [1].”
 Dr. *Dodwell* had given the very same reason before him, and
 must therefore have the honor of it. “ When the Apostles,
 “ says he, and others the first Martyrs of Christianity, quali-
 “ fied with this endowment, had once propagated the Gospel,
 “ and made converts in many places, the natives of those
 “ places were able to carry on the design, and without any
 “ Miracle were qualified to teach their own countrymen, in the
 “ several languages, wherein they were born [1].”

Thus we see, how readily they can dress up an hypothesis,
 and apply it presently as an allowed fact, to support the opi-

[1] Ch. p. 74.

[2] Dod. p. 91.

nion which they are defending. They suppose, that when the first and gifted Preachers of the Gospel, had made a number of Converts in any barbarous country, they immediately left the whole care and administration of it, to those barbarous Converts, who, by preaching the word to their countrymen in their own native language, superseded all farther use of *the gift of tongues*. A mere imaginary scheme, without the least foundation in reason, history or experience ! The Jewish converts indeed, who were previously instructed in all the main principles, on which Christianity is founded, might soon become masters of the mystery of the Gospel, and be qualified to teach it, as it was opened and explained to them by their own scriptures. But to converts of barbarous nations and strange languages, utterly unacquainted with every principle, which bore any relation either to Judaism or Christianity, the case was quite different, and to acquire a competent knowledge of the Christian doctrine must have been a work of much time and great difficulty, so as to be hardly attainable at all in any degree of perfection except to a very few. It is incredible therefore, that any of those Barbarians, though converted to a general belief and profession of faith in Christ, should ever have been intrusted by the primitive planters of the Gospel, with the important charge of converting the rest of their country, by preaching it, and administering it's sacred rites and offices. Nay, experience has evinced the contrary, and shewn that either no such custom had ever obtained, or that it was wholly fruitless and ineffectual from the very beginning ; since in all the barbarous nations of the world, no footstep has ever been discovered of any succession of native Preachers, nor any remains indeed of Christianity itself, though it is confidently affirmed to have been preached to them all. Nor have I ever read or heard, that
any

any such method has ever been practised, or thought to be practicable, by the Missionaries of these modern ages, 'for how great soever their harvest may have been found, yet all the laborers in it have constantly been supplied from time to time from Christian countries.

The first care of all modern Missionaries, in qualifying themselves for a due discharge of their mission, is by great study and pains to acquire a competent skill of the language of that country, to which they are destined, for without this, all their labors, they know, would be vain and fruitless. *Francis Xavier*, called *the Apostle of the Indies*, as I have elsewhere observed, complains in one of his letters, that he found himself to be nothing better than a mute statue among the barbarians, till he had learnt the rudiments of their tongue. This previous use of the language, acquired by the modern Missionaries, answers the purpose of the gift of tongues in the primitive Missionaries; and the arts and sciences with which they are commonly well furnished, supply the place of their Miracles. For in barbarous nations, whatever exceeds that degree of power or skill in man, which they had ever seen exerted before, it will have the same effect as a miraculous gift, in exciting admiration, and a reverence to the persons who perform it. Yet, with all these qualities and endowments, managed with the utmost art and dexterity of Jesuitical policy, the whole, which the Romish Missions have been able to effect in *China*, where they have long had a sort of establishment, under the protection and encouragement of the Court itself, is, to compound the matter as it were between the two religions, by forming a motley sort of worship out of the rites of them both, and humoring the genius of the country so as to admit their *Confucius* to a partnership of honor with himself.

But

But let us return to the state of the primitive Church, in which the *gift of tongues*, according to the opinion of all Divines, has ever been held the most necessary of all others to the propagation of the Gospel. And this same necessity of it was so far from having been superseded in those primitive ages, that it continued in it's full force through all the succeeding ages, and appears to be as much wanted at this day, as it was in the very earliest days, as it is confirmed and declared by the experience of all Missionaries. It is surprizing then, that these two Miracles of raising the dead and of Tongues, so usefull and important to the cause of the Gospel, should vanish of a sudden and cease together so early in the Christian Church: and if one of them, as these Doctors contend, was withdrawn, because it was no longer of any use; how will they account for the cessation of the other, which as themselves own, continued still to be usefull and even necessary for those new converts among the *Barbarians* whom they talk of, and to whom the preaching of the Gospel was committed, tho' they had no occasion for the gift of tongues, yet wanted, as they tell us, the assistance of other Miracles on many accounts? And none surely could be more serviceable to them, than that of *raising the dead*. On the whole then. After all the real difficulties, which are found on the one side, and all the evasive shifts, which are offered on the other, what can we reasonably think or say of these two Miracles, which are supposed to have been withdrawn, as soon almost as they were claimed, but what I have already intimated of one of them, that they never subsisted at all after the days of the Apostles, but having been rashly claimed by *Irenæus*, or imposed upon him by others of more craft, yet found upon trial, too difficult to be maintained, were presently laid aside, and suffered to expire with their Author?

But I have offered one particular objection to the reality of this gift of Tongues, which I take to be of the greatest weight, as it is expressed by me in the following words. “ It is very remarkable, that this primitive Bishop, who ascribes it so liberally to others, appears to have been in great want of it himself, for the propagation of the Gospel in his own Discourse among the *Celtæ* or *Gauls*; where, as Dr. Cave interprets his words, *It was not the least part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the country, a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1].”

To this Dr. Dodwell answers, “ that I mention this objection in such a manner, as betrays a consciousness, on my part, that Dr. Cave had here made a mistake, and said more for *Irenæus*, than ever he had said for himself; yet because it founded for my purpose, I could not pass it over [2].” And in the next page he adds; “ Dr. Middleton did not chuse to take this interpretation upon himself, but leaves it upon Dr. Cave, and we must place it among the *few oversights* of that excellent writer.—But if this be a *gross mistake*, and nothing to his purpose, he makes an observation of his own, on this head, which he thinks important.”—Dr. Church answers also in the same strain, and says; “ Our Author asserts, that *Irenæus* wanted this Miracle himself for the propagation of the Gospel among the *Gauls*—and Dr. Cave indeed says, that this is plainly intimated by *Irenæus*, that he was forced to learn the language of the country—but *Irenæus’s* words express only, *that he was for the most part employed in a barbarous language* [3].”

For my own part, since my interpretations, how right and clear soever, are sure to be suspected and contradicted by all

[1] Free Inq. p. 120.

[2] Dod. p. 88.

[3] Ch. p. 262.

writers of the same zeal and genius with these Doctors, so I have always been glad, as oft as I have found it in my power, to confirm them by the testimony of some more favored Author, whose learning they admire, and whose principles and orthodoxy they reverence. This I have done in the present case, by sheltering myself under the authority of Dr. Cave, a writer after their own hearts, and whose judgement is usually decisive with them in all cases, and ought certainly to be so in this, where it appears to be unquestionably true. For in flat contradiction to these Doctors, I here affirm, that I was so far from being conscious of any mistake made by Doctor Cave, in his exposition of *Irenæus's* words, that it then appeared, and still appears to me, as certain and demonstrable, that he has given us the true meaning of them, and the onely one indeed, which they will bear.

This sense however, tho' plain and obvious, is rejected by our Doctors, it does not suit with their scheme: and Doctor Dodwell, according to custom, presents us with the whole passage, and his own translation of it, of which I shall here transcribe, as much as relates to our purpose. " But you will not expect from us, *who reside among the Gauls, and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect*, any artificial composition of words, which we have not learned; nor the force of an Orator, which we have not aimed at, &c." Now the words with which alone we are concerned, and on which the question wholly turns are these, *καὶ περὶ βάρβαρον διάλεκτον τὸ πλεῖστον ἀσχολούμενων*, which Dr. Dodwell has rendered, *and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect*. A translation flat and insipid, and carrying no distinct sense or idea, which a reader will easily perceive: yet the words themselves have a force in them, which evidently declares their proper meaning, and which I translate thus; you

will not expect from me, who reside among the Celtæ, and the greatest part of whose leisure is intirely employed, upon a barbarous dialect, any artificial composition of words, &c.

Now the single quæstion arising from this passage is, *in what way could Irenæus's leisure be so greatly occupied by this barbarous dialect?* to which Dr. Dodwell makes no other Answer but this, "If any man can find out in these words, *that Irenæus was put to difficulties in learning the language of the Gauls*, he will discover, what I cannot perceive is alluded to. The words have no reference at all to that quæstion; and if we were to draw inferences from them, I think they would rather incline to the contrary [1]." Dr. Church is somewhat more explicit, and tells us, "that his leisure may full as well be understood to have been taken up *in using, and speaking, and writing a barbarous language, as in learning it*. Nay the former, says he, is a better excuse, and more to his purpose, than the other would have been, as continually conversing in a rough and unpolished language, is more apt to spoil the stile, than the learning it [2]."

But nothing surely can be more weak and frivolous, than this account of the matter. To imagine, that *Irenæus's* leisure was taken up *by writing this barbarous dialect*, is quite ridiculous, for what can we suppose him to have written in it? Our Doctors perhaps would tell us, his Sermons; which they find a task of some trouble to themselves: but these early Preachers had no such custom: were no slaves to the labor either of writing, or even composing them: they delivered with all simplicity, what they conceived upon the spot, and poured out those lessons of piety and Christianity, which they themselves prac-

[1] Dod. p. 89,

[2] Ch. p. 262.

tised, and were desirous to infuse into the people. Besides; all the works, which *Irenæus* ever wrote for the public, and which remained after his death, are declared by all the Antients, to have been written in Greek: and the five books against Heresies, his capital work, is still extant in that language, which was his native tongue. So that his leisure could not be so much taken up by writing the *Celtic* dialect; and much less could the mere use of speaking it, or of preaching in it occasionally to the people, engross so large a share of it, as to be the occasion of that difficulty, and continual employment to him, of which he seems to complain.

But here, another quæstion naturally occurs, in which the reader, by this time, may be impatient to be satisfied,---that is, *by what means Irenæus could acquire the use of this barbarous dialect, which gave him so much trouble?* On this head our Doctors are wholly silent: they do not chuse to affirm directly, that it was infused into him *by inspiration*; yet that is the thing, which they propose to insinuate; since they have not suggested the least intimation of any other way. But this notion of it's being the effect *of the gift of tongues or of inspiration*, is absolutely inconsistent with *Irenæus's* own account of it. A dialect infused by God could not possibly create any difficulty to him, either in learning, speaking or writing it, since the perfect use of it would be communicated at once, and it would flow from him as freely as his native tongue: much less can we imagine, that it would debase the purity of any other more valuable or usefull language, of which he was previously possessed, since that would be a real injury to him, and while it enabled him to preach the Gospel in one particular place, would render him less able to preach it with the same force in another.

To sum up this argument therefore in a few words. „ Since *Irenæus* expressly declares, that the greatest part of his leisure was employed upon a barbarous dialect: and the word ἀσχολούμενον, which he here uses, implies a leisure particularly devoted to literary studies; and since he intimates at the same time, that his continual attention to this dialect had disqualified him in some degree from writing with any elegance in the Greek tongue, it is impossible, that he could be speaking of any language inspired into him, or of any thing else, but of the necessity, which he was under of learning this rude dialect, to which he was an utter stranger, by his own pains and study: a task of much time and labor, and what would not only create infinite trouble to him, before he could acquire a free use of it, but would naturally corrupt his style and manner of writing in any other language. And thus, after all the silly cavils and evasive shifts of these answerers, Dr. *Cave*, we find, has given us the true interpretation of this passage, where he tells us, *that it was not the least part of Irenæus's trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the Celtæ, a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1].

I have dwelt the longer on this article, because all my antagonists insist, that these very Fathers, who attest the miraculous gifts of their several ages, were, above all other Christians, the most eminently indued with them, tho' they themselves make not the least claim to them, but ascribe them always, either to the Christian people in general, or to mean and illiterate laymen, women and boys. For these Advocates of the miraculous gifts are very sensible, that it would go a great way towards destroying the general claim of them, if, while the lowest of the Christians are affirmed to have possessed them in

[1] *Cave*, p. 120.

a large measure, *the Martyrs, Pastors, and Bishops* of the Church should appear to have been in want of them, even for the necessary discharge of their pastoral functions; for which reason they attempt, as far as they are able, to invalidate the credit of this fact, or to elude the force of it at least, by several different expedients.

Dr. *Dodwell* observes, how in a testimony, which I have cited from *Irenæus*, it is said, “*that all, who were true Disciples of Christ, wrought Miracles in his name*; in which character *Irenæus* himself, and the rest of the primitive writers before him must be included;—and that there was a plain reason why they should usually lay the stress on the meanest people, as working them, not as excluding their superiors, but because the mention of these, who were the least capable of craft and fraud, must be most convincing to Gainsayers—then he adds what he calls the true reason, why the Primitive Fathers did not mention themselves on this head, which really was, to avoid any ostentation, and to do the greater honor to Christianity, by shewing, that the meanest of the Christian professors had the same gifts, when they happened to have any contest with the Heathens [1].” Dr. *Church* also, according to custom, entertains us with the same story, and says; “that tho’ some of these powers are represented as common to Christians in general, yet we may easily apprehend, that they were more eminently vouchsafed to the Pastors and Governors of the Church, who were under the greatest difficulty, and to whom the business of converting the Heathen world peculiarly belonged [2].” “And if God was pleased to communicate such divine gifts at that time to any persons for the benefit of the Church, he would favor these principal persons

[1] Dod. p. 47, 51.

[2] Ch. p. 110.

“ with them. Some indeed are said to have been imparted even
 “ to private Laymen. But 'tis hard to think, while these pos-
 “ sessed them, that the Bishops and Martyrs of the Church
 “ should be without them, and that those who succeeded the
 “ Apostles, in the great work of propagating the Gospel, did
 “ not also succede them in being favored with Miracles. And
 “ the reason, as he imagines, why none of these venerable
 “ Saints made any pretension to them, either for themselves or
 “ the Apostolic Fathers before them, was the mere Effect of
 “ their modesty and humility, and *to avoid the very appearance of*
 “ *vanity and ostentation* [1].”

But from this single passage, which I have been examining,
 all this refined reasoning is overturned at once; for it clearly in-
 forms us, that *Irenæus*, tho' he affirms this gift of tongues to
 have been common in his days, and *that he had heard many speak-*
ing all kinds of languages in the Church, was himself still destitute
 of it, tho' the Bishop and leader of them all, and obliged with
 great difficulty to learn *the barbarous dialect of the Celtæ*, among
 whom he resided, before he could do any good upon them, or
 was qualified to propagate the Gospel in his own Diocese. Our
 Doctors however, tho' they think it necessary at present to deny
 this fact; yet being aware, that they may be driven at last to
 own it as true, seem to be providing a sort of retreat before-
 hand, by changing their tone, and reducing their answers to a
 pitch more conformable to such a concession: for after all which
 they have been alledging, to prove these Fathers to have been
 chiefly instructed with the Miraculous Powers of the Church, it
 is pleasant to observe, with what ease and calmness, Dr. *Church*
 seems prepared to give it all up again: for speaking to this very
 point of *Irenæus's want of the gift of tongues*, he treats it as a thing

[1] Ch. p. 116, 117.

of no importance, nor worthy of our inquiry, whether he wanted it or not: and if the whole difficulty were granted, and Irenæus allowed to have been destitute of it; it could not amount, he says, to an objection, nor overthrow his positive testimony, that such a power was really subsisting in the Church, and indulged to many other persons, wholly obscure and unknown [1].”

And now after an impartial review and comparison of all, that has been alledged in this controversy, on the one side or the other, I have laid before the reader the genuin state of three miraculous gifts, the most important, and useful of any, which were claimed by the primitive Church. It will be needless therefore to trouble myself with the examination of any more of them; since the rest, as our Doctors themselves will allow, must follow the fate of these three, and all of them stand or fall together; as being all built upon the same foundation, and supported by the same evidence. But in the article of healing the sick, since Dr. *Dodwell* seems to lay a singular stress on one particular Miracle, and the clear attestation which is given to it by *Tertullian*, I shall just add a word or two, which may help to illustrate the true nature of it.

[2] Ch. p. 263.



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P R E F A C E.

IT was easy to foresee, that the publication of my *Free Inquiry* would presently raise up against me, as my *Introductory Discourse* had done before, many fierce Adversaries, with Answers and confutations of it, charging me with desperate designs, and pernicious consequences; with calumniating the Holy Fathers; misrepresenting their testimonies; and straining them to senses quite different from their own. For this is no more, than what I had reason to expect, from the very nature of my work; the purpose of which is, to extirpate an inveterate opinion, which has ever been held up by the authority of the Clergy, and obtains credit at this day, in every Church, and sect of Christians whatsoever.

Opinions of this kind, possessed of the public belief, and thought to be connected with the public religion, necessarily create many strong prejudices in their favor, and many motives of different kinds, for the perpetual support and defence of them; ever ready to give the alarm, against all free inquiry, and to excite a clamor against the Inquirer, from all, who had ever preached them from the pulpit, or maintained them from the press; all, who thought them true, or found them useful to their ease, their authority, or their fortunes: whose resentment on such occasions will always be more strong, in proportion, as the opinions in dispute happen to be weak and likely to be disgraced by the trial.

It was impossible therefore, that my argument could be received with indifference in this inquisitive nation, unless the incapacity of the author to illustrate and adorn it, had exposed it

to the neglect of men of taste and politeness. But since the approbation, which it has met with, gives me reason to think, that I have not greatly failed in that part: and since the truth or at least the high probability of it is loudly acknowledged by all disinterested readers; I do not know how to account for that virulence of zeal, with which it is opposed still by the generality of these writers, but by imputing it to their prejudices, or habitual bigotry, or to some motive especially of interest, which, of course, bars all entrance to opinions, though ever so probable, if not stamped by an authority, which can sweeten them with rewards.

For to what other principle can we ascribe, that uniform and perpetual contradiction, which they give to every single article of the Free Inquiry? Some of them do not scruple to declare, *that there is not the least pretence to any sort of evidence; nor so much as the shadow of an argument in the whole work*: others, though they allow one or two things perhaps to be plausible, yet treat them presently as bubbles, and blow them at once into air, as void of all solidity: nay, they turn my whole argument so strongly against me, as to make it prove the very contrary, to what I proposed to establish by it. Instead of diminishing the credit of the Fathers, they affirm it to be *a clear vindication of their honor*; and instead of exposing *their credulity*, to be *a proof onely of my own*: instead of demonstrating *the cessation of the primitive miracles*, they call it *a demonstration of their continuance*; and instead of *-serving the interests of Protestantism, the strongest temptation in the world to make men Papists*: in short, they profess to find nothing else in my book, from one end of it to the other, but a success of *downright forgeries and falsifications*.

Now what instruction can we expect, in a question of this importance, from answerers, so void of candor; who, with a
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solemn air and pretext of religion, can offer such an insult to the common sense of every reader? For, notwithstanding all their confident assertions, it is certain, that nothing can be made more evident by any book, than these two points are, by the Free Inquiry: first, that the Facts and testimonies produced in it, must necessarily *detract somewhat, from the characters of the Fathers, and the implicit faith, which has been given to them in their reports of the primitive miracles*: secondly, that the general argument of it *strikes at the very root of Popery*, and must consequently be fatal to it, wherever it may happen to be received in any Christian country.

But let the bigotted, the interested, or the powerfull exert themselves as much as they please, it is a truth confirmed to us by the experience of all ages, that all the opinions, which now reign in the world, how strongly soever established, or how antient soever they may be; if not grounded originally on nature, but on the consent onely and contrivance of men, will be sure in the end, to find the same fate with old buildings: which, while they acquire a sort of veneration to themselves from their very age, are every day gradually weakened and insensibly consumed by that same age; till being found at last rotten and ruinous, they are demolished, by common consent, as unable, either to stand, or to be supported any longer. Such will be the fate of the opinion, now defended by my Antagonists: for the fullness of time seems to be come, or at least to be nearly approaching, when we may be allowed to laugh without offence at the pious frauds of the antient Fathers, and add the stories of their miracles to that numerous list of impostures; to those *Oracles, Auguries, Divinations, Magic, Witches,* &c. which have all flourished in their turns, and triumphed over the senses and reason of men, in every age and nation of the world.

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This I may now augurate, with the greater assurance, not onely from the consciouſness of my own conviction, grounded on an impartial inquiry into the case, but from the apparent weakness and impertinence of all the several Answers which have been published in contradiction to it. For tho' many things are urged in them with great confidence, which, to readers of little learning, may seem to charge me with ignorance or blunders or even willfull misrepresentation, all which I shall wipe off at once, whenever I find occasion to touch upon them; yet there is not a single argument in them all, which can reasonably be thought to invalidate, or in any degree to weaken the capital position of my book. So that, after all the violence of this attack, I find myself at liberty to affirm still, with the same conviction, what I affirmed originally in my Title page; *That we have no sufficient reason to believe, upon the authority of the Primitive Fathers, that any miraculous powers were continued to the Church, after the days of the Apostles.*

Such an affirmation indeed from me, may justly be thought exceptionable; who am too much interested in the quæſtion, to be considered as an equal Judge in it: but besides the confirmation, which it has received from the general voice of my readers, the public has seen a proof of it, superior to all exception, from the generous labors of two or three Clergymen, who, after a strict examination of the merits of each cause, have taken the pains to shew, by a strong and masterly force of reasoning, that the argument, both of *the Introductory Discourse*, and of *the Free Inquiry*, remains unhurt and unshaken, by all the studied cavils and subtil objections, which the most expert and zealous of my Adversaries have been able to alledge against it.

The persons, whom I mean, are utter strangers to me; and
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cannot be supposed therefore to have written out of any partial or personal regard to me; nor from any other motive indeed, but a sincere love of truth; since nothing else could have force enough to engage Clergymen in the defence of an opinion, openly decied and disgraced by those superiors through whose hands the rewards and honors of their profession are chiefly distributed. For though the cause of the Free Inquiry, be the cause of Protestantism itself, and what, above all things, tends to unite it's divided sects, and to strengthen it's common interests; yet, by a sort of policy not easy to be accounted for, the insinuations of a few peevish, narrow-minded, bigotted Churchmen have had weight enough to render it suspected and odious to the leaders of this free and protestant State.

It is not my design, in the present work, to enter into a minute discussion of the objections which may be found in all, or in any indeed, of the several answers to my Free Inquiry, but to select such onely as seem to be worthy of any notice, or to carry any weight with them: and since the two Doctors, Dodwell and Church, appear to be the most applauded and relied upon by all, who profess any zeal for the cause, which they defend, it shall be my chief business, to examine the merit of their performances, not omitting at the same time, to pay due respect to the rest, wherever I find them applying either the same argument with any new force, or a different one, which may afford any opportunity either of instruction or entertainment to the reader.

But before I descend to the examination of these particulars, it may be of use towards illustrating the general question, to premise a few observations on the present state of it, and to consider, how it now stands, after the correction, which it has received from the hands of these Inquisitors.

I. One of the objections, which I at first proposed to the reality of the Primitive Miracles, was this; that none of our writers, who maintained the continuance of them beyond the days of the Apostles, had ever been able to settle the bounds between true and false miracles, or to mark out, by any probable rule, the exact time when the true ceased, and the false began. So that a serious Inquirer into primitive antiquity must ever be perplexed with this doubt, that the pious reverence, which he comes disposed to pay to the supposed interposition of God, in this or that pretended instance of it, may be nothing else but the effect of credulity and superstition, and a criminal compliance with the frauds and fictions of men.

My Antagonists are very sensible of this difficulty; and have all in their turns, attempted to give some solution of it: but the vanity of their attempts, instead of removing, has confirmed it onely the more, and shewn it to be inexplicable. For example; Mr. Jackson, who appeared the first, asserts the continuance of the miraculous powers no farther than to the time of *Origen*; by which he intimates his suspicion, of one half at least of the third Century. The second, an Anonymous Letter-writer, defends the subsistence of them, to the end of that century. Yet, even before that time, while he supposes the Church to be guided and guarded still by all it's miraculous powers, he declares it to have been greatly degenerated from it's original purity. Dr. Church confines his defence also to the three first centuries; not meddling with any miracles of a later date; nor yet determining, as he says, *on the one side or the other, either for their truth or their falsehood*; but supposing, that among *the many fabulous accounts of the succeeding ages, there might be a mixture still of some which were genuine*. Dr. Dodwell considers the three first Centuries in general, as the proper period of true miracles, yet thinks it necessary

still, to take in some share also of the fourth, as far as to the establishment of Christianity by the civil power; and for the rest, contents himself by saying; *that many wonderful works might probably be wrought afterwards for some great ends.* Mr. Whiston alone has ventured to launch out beyond the middle of this century; taking every thing for Gospel, that he meets with in the Church, till *the heresy of Athanasius*, as he calls it, by corrupting the pure stream of it's faith, provoked God to withdraw his gifts, and give it up to the wiles and delusions of *Satan*. Mr. Brooke, the last, and ~~most~~ voluminous of all these answerers, after a full deliberation on what the rest had severally offered, seems to prefer the opinion of the first, in restraining the period of undoubted miracles *to the days of Origen*: for though he declares them to have been withdrawn *between the time of Origen and Chrysostom*; yet he signifies his suspicion of all, which are later than the first, and affirms all to have been certainly forged, which are attested by the last of those Fathers.

This difficulty then, about fixing the æra of the miraculous powers, continues still in it's full force, as a sort of presumptive argument, against the reality of any such powers after the days of the Apostles. But my Antagonists, after all their pains, to account for it, finding it at last a clog upon their system, which they are unable to remove, content themselves by dismissing it with an air of contempt, and declaring it, to be of no consequence at all; whereas if their hypothesis be admitted, that true and false miracles were promiscuously subsisting in the primitive ages, till the true happened, we know not when, nor how, to be finally withdrawn, nothing can be more certain, than that it would be of the greatest moment to us, to be able to separate the one from the other. For as true miracles must ever be wrought for some great and beneficial end, and the false on

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the contrary for some crafty and selfish ends; so the one would lead us of course to a religion worthy of God; the other into error and superstition, and a worship consequently offensive to him. But let us consider a little the nature of this hypothesis, which these Champions here maintain. They suppose, that true and false miracles were indiscriminately wrought at the same time, and in the same Church, without any rule of discerning the one from the other, till the true ceased, and the false prevailed: and that the Church continued ever after in that state, the perpetual dupe of false miracles, down to the time of the reformation. But nothing surely can be more absurd, than to imagine, that there ever was, or ever could be any such jumble and concurrence of true and false miracles in any age, or that the false especially should beat out the true, and the craft of the Devil supersede the power of God. For whatever coloring they may give to their hypothesis, and in what solemn words soever they may cloath it, that is the genuine consequence of it. Mr. Whiston indeed expresses it by saying; *that the forgeries of Athanasius by their prevalence in the Church provoked God to withdraw his miraculous powers*, and give it up to the delusions of Satan: yet the fact is the same, as it is affirmed by them all, that after an indiscriminate subsistence, or struggle as it were of true and false miracles, through a century or two, the true insensibly expired and the false onely remained. The absurdity of which notion, as it naturally flows from the cause which they defend, must yield a strong presumption in favor of my opinion, that, after the days of the Apostles, the miraculous pretensions of the succeeding ages, were all of the same kind; contrived by the craft of a few, and imposed upon the credulity of the many.

2. The reader will remember, that when I published the *Introductory Discourse*, I found our Divines, who were chiefly intrusted

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ed with the defence of our religion, against Infidels and Heretics, frankly asserting the continuance of the miraculous powers, not only to the fourth, but to the fifth and sixth centuries, and ranking them all upon a level, with the very earliest after the days of the Apostles. My view therefore in that treatise, was to expose the extravagance of that bigotry; and give a check to the prevalence of principles, which are absolutely fatal to the Protestant cause: and my attempt has had this clear effect, not only of putting to shame and silence the rashness of those zealots, whom I then particularly attacked, but of making their successors in the present cause, so cautious and shy as we now see them, of touching even upon the fourth century. So that, if Dr. Chapman should once more think fit, to undertake the defence of Symeon Stylites, and his miracles, upon the illustrious authority of the Great Theodoret; or should a second *Berriman* affirm the divinity of that Creed, said to be delivered from heaven by the *Virgin Mary*, to *Gregory, the wonder-worker*; or insist again on the credibility of those Monkish tales, which are related of *Pope Gregory, the Great*, they would be hissed off the stage, even by their old friends; as the advocates of a superstition, too gross to deserve a moment's attention. Here then we see one great and manifest advantage actually gained to the Protestant cause, by the argument of the Free Inquiry; in clearing us at once, from the greatest part of that incumbrance which had hitherto clogged and blunted the vigor of our defence against Rome. For out of four successive centuries, to which the Divines of this Protestant Church were roundly ascribing all the kinds of miraculous gifts, and leading us insensibly into the very depths of Popery; the Free Inquiry, by the confession of all its adversaries, has now freed us from the Impostures of two of them, or if we reckon to the time of Origen, of two and an half: and

I make

I make no doubt, but that, in the issue of this controversy, it will free us in the same manner, from the rest, howaverse^r forever their advocates may be, to give them up, and whatever clamor they may raise about the consequences.

Since my Antagonists, who appear to have known nothing of the state of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, which they now pretend to confute, have not yet learnt from it a right notion of the point in dispute between us: The position, which I affirm, is this; that after the days of the Apostles, no miraculous powers were continued to the Church, or the particular members of it, as a standing proof of the truth of the Gospel, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of the Heathens. This is what the Title of my work implies; what my whole reasoning turns upon; and what I have often signified in the course of it, to be my precise meaning. Yet these answerers treat my argument, as if it absolutely rejected every thing miraculous, whether that within the Church, by the agency of men, or any other occasions by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles, whenever he thinks fit, no body, I dare say, will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, since the days of the Apostles, is an inquiry which I do not meddle with; the single point, which I maintain, is, *that the Primitive Church had no standing power of working any.* This distinction was seen at once by those writers, who have appeared in the defence of my argument; and who have justly reprov'd these Antagonists for their neglect of it, as being necessary to a right management of the controversy, as well as obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this public admonition, we find them still declaring it, to be a mere evasion and subterfuge, never intended by me at first, but an after thought,

[1] Toll. 29. Lett. Def. 16.

contrived to elude the force of some objections, which were found to press me [1].

But tho' the distinction be just and clear, my view in marking it out, was not to derive any advantage from it to my cause, for I knew none, which it could give, but merely to shorten the dispute, and prevent impertinent wranglings, on facts and instances, which have no relation to it: and it is certain that, if a due regard had been paid to it, it would have saved my answerers some trouble in several instances of that sort; and especially in the story of *Polycarp's* martyrdom, on which they all now proceed to exert their utmost pains and zeal, in defending the miracles, which are ascribed to it, as if they were decisive, and utterly subversive of the main position of my book: whereas in truth whatever be the real character of them, may be, they are nothing to the purpose, as being neither wrought by any standing power in the Church, nor carrying any evidence, that any such power was then subsisting in it.

But if these miracles have no relation, as I say, to the present dispute, it is asked, for what reason then did I introduce them into it? To which I answer, that it was for no other, than to expose the trifling and frivolous nature of them, and to shew, how fondly the Christians were disposed, in this very early and pious age, to give a miraculous turn to every unusual incident, which might happen to take place, on any important and affecting occasion. *****

[1] Ch. Pref. 8, 9.



ORATIO

DE NOVO

Physiologiæ Explicandæ

M U N E R E,

EX

Celeberrimi WOODWARDI Testamento

I N S T I T U T O :

Habita CANTABRIGIÆ in Scholis Publicis a
CONYERS MIDDLETON, S.T.P.

Academiæ Cantabrigienfis Protobibliothecario & Lectore
ibidem WOODWARDIANO.



Q R A T I O

De N O V O

PHYSIOLOGIÆ EXPLICANDÆ

M U N E R E, &c.

CUM res præclarè gestæ, aut ad communem utilitatem sapienter institutæ, apud omnes ferè gentes, solenni hominum cœtu ludisque celebrari, & posteritatis memoriæ commendari solerent; tum muneris hodierno die instituti dignitas, quæ hunc doctorum virorum conventum frequentiamque congregavit, id etiam meritò flagitare videtur, ut non sine publicâ quâdam gratulatione jam primùm suscipiatur, & ad sempiterna literarum commoda solenni oratione consecretur. Nam si honoribus artes aluntur, & si ab artium literarumque gloriâ Academiæ nostræ vitam spiritumque ducunt, nihil sanè Academicis lætabilius, nihil gratulatione dignius accidere potest, quàm præmia literarum studiis alendis publicè assignata.

Quamobrem gratulari vobis imprimis liceat nova hæc-
ce Almæ Matri addita ornamenta; novos hosce, quibus ipse
nunc fungor, honores: non enim meos esse putetis, quòd
ad me primùm delatos cernitis; vestri sunt, Academici; vobis
in commune propositi; vestrumque certè aliquis hos ipsos la-

borum suorum fructus posthac percipiet; me propterea doctior, digniorque, quod hoc jam præmio constituto, atque hâc tantâ scientiæ supellectile comparatâ, studio & meditatione instructior accedat necesse sit.

Opinionem quandam apud homines doctos esse sentio, doctrinæ artiumque bonarum studia hebescere per hosce annos & languere cœpisse: idque iniquæ nostrorum temporum conditioni, factionibusque istis, quæ Rempublicam tam diu vexârunt, adscribendum plerique censent; quibus juvenus nostra infecta penitus atque imbuta, non doctrinâ sese ornare, non artibus instruere curat, nisi eis, quibus ad honores, Magnorumque gratiam viam sibi muniri cernit, partium scilicet, non literarum studiis.

Ego verò crediderim potius, Academici, veterem istum studiorum ardorem idcirco jam paulatim deferbuisse, quod artes ferè omnes nostrorum hominum ingeniis ita elaboratæ & excultæ & ad illud quasi culmen & fastigium evectæ sunt, ut nullos ultra progressus capere posse videantur: ita ut præ gloriæ fructusque assequendi desperatione, operæque & temporis perdendi metu, cursum multi institutum omittere, aliamque sibi vitæ & fortunarum viam investigare cogantur. Artiumque adeò Victrix Alma Mater, literarum penitus orbe peragrato, otio ferè languida & mœsta, sortem jam suam deflere videtur, quod nihil ultra restet debellandum, nec alia scientiarum regio peragrandâ.

At ecce Vobis novus jam tandem Orbis commonstratus! novi Scientiæ campi patefacti! & digni illi quidem, quibus in colendis industriam ingeniumque vestrum exerceatis, cum tot eruditionis instrumenta, tantam Studiorum novorum materiem, in hoc literarum emporium importari inde videatis.

Has nobis regiones, tantis frugibus fœtas, divitiis refertas aperuit, *Woodwardus*; & ad eum finem aperuit, ut hac præmiorum ubertate invitati in nostram illas ditionem redigere-
mus. Haud aliter populorum duces, quas sibi terras sub-
gentas, occupandasque destinaverant, earum terrarum fruges,
mercesque publicè exponere solitos accepimus, quo studium
suis animosque ad labores perferendos adjungerent.

Woodwardi autem nomen, cujus tanta in nos beneficia ho-
dierno die celebramus, ad sese orationem meam vocat, &
de laudibus ejus prædicandis admonet. Nihil enim æquius,
quàm cujus ex liberalitate hoc ipsum dicendi munus ortum
atque originem duxerit, ut ab eo potissimum ornando dicendi
etiam materiem argumentumque ducamus.

Hunc laudis & gloriæ fructum illustria clarorum virorum
facta tanquam mercedem requirunt; non tam mortuorum
famæ debitam, quàm viventium utilitati accommodatam,
quò nos aliorum laudibus, quasi gloriolæ stimulis admotis, ad
virtutes eorum assequendas concitemur.

De homine verò tam celebri, tam ab omnibus cognito, & in
urbe amplissimâ, oculisque civium vitam omnem degente,
quid omnino novi & inauditi proferri poterit? Quid, in quo
non Vos ipsi dicentis vocem prævenire & antevertere queatis?
Etenim si, quod de Medico ante omnia prædicandum, de Me-
dicinæ scientiâ & laude ejus præstanti dicerem; at quis igno-
rat, *Woodwardi* nomen inter summos Artis Professores princi-
pem semper locum obtinuisse? multosque hoc ipso tempore
superesse novimus, qui quod vivant valeantque *Woodwardo*
se uni debere profitentur.

Si, quod nos potissimum commovere debet, Doctrinam ejus
excellentem multiplicemque celebrarem; at scripta ejus, om-
nium manibus trita, omniumque pene in linguas conversa,
illam jam diu demonstrant.

Si,

Si, quod huiusce diei celebritas postulare maximè videatur, Liberalitatem ejus animique magnitudinem commemorarem; at hoc ipsum munus, quo jam fungor, illud omne ~~se~~ me tace-
cente declararet; atque hæc nostra Academiæ sempiternum munificentia ejus monumentum extabit.

In his autem egregiis *Woodwardi* virtutibus, quas omnibus notas, & cum nonnullis etiam communes habuit; habuit tamen in singulis ita proprium suum quiddam & peculiare, ut quisquis illo familiariter usus esset, novam faciliè & præcipuam laudis materiem elicere inde possit.

In Medicinâ enim nonnulla, si non ab eo inventa, at auctoritate ejus commendata, & in communem usum recepta, magni ad vitam hominum conservandam momenti esse reperiuntur. Ingenio autem uti in omnibus eleganti erat, & polito, sic præscripta sua ita temperanda semper & administranda curavit, ut vim suam non certius modò citiusque obtinerent, sed ut nausæ simul minus & fastidii ægris & languentibus darent. Quod verò maximum est; non artem suam ad ambitionem avaritiamve accommodare; non magnorum gratiam divitumque copias obsequiis captare; sed pauperibus potius opem benevolam & gratuitam præbere solebat.

Vidi ego, Academici, fores ejus, tanquam *Æsculapii* quoddam vestibulum, debiliū turbâ refertas; quibus si vires modò suppeterent, ut ejus in conspectum venirent, de reditu parum cogitasse videntur; tantam in eo uno valetudinis recuperandæ spem fiduciamque posuerant. Nec spes quidem illos sæpe fefellit; nam tantâ ille omnes tum patientiâ tum comitate excepit, quasi non curare solum, sed placere etiam ægris studisset; nullâ sibi laboris mercede propositâ, nisi quam animi conscientia suppeditaret; & vel rei ipsius famam comprimere cupisset, ni famam istam plures ad se ægrotos invitaturam,

turam, pluresque adeò benefaciendi occasiones daturam sibi sperasset. Haud mirum igitur, quod quibus artibus Æsculapius in, cœlestium numerum evectus fuerit, iisdem *Woodward* miseris hisce quasi præsens quidam Deus haberetur.

Doctrinam autem suam non Artis suæ angustiiis terminavit; neque ei contentus fuit, quæ ad summi Medici famam satis esset, nisi omnem istam cognitionis & scientiæ ferè infinitatem animo comprehendere ac complecti potuisset. Quoties eum in Bibliothecâ suâ, quam instructissimam habuit, de Artium omnium studiis ita disputantem audiavi, ac si disputandi copiâ & ubertate vel librorum suorum copiam varietatemque adæquare conaretur? Ita tamen de singulis eruditè; ac si in arte illâ, de quâ differebat, enutritus, eamque unicè professus esset? In rerum autem Romanarum cognitione tam curiosè versatus est; ut me, qui huic ipsi rei non operæ certè parum studii-que dedissem, quique Romæ etiam fuisset, ab homine occupato, aliudque agente, tantopere superari non tam molestè quidem ferre, quàm mirari solem.

Quicquid verò in reliquis studiis profecerit; in Physicâ certè neminem sui similem paremve habuit: eam autem velim Physicæ partem, quæ in Fossilium, uti vocant, rerumve, quas Terra intus in venis inclusas contineat, naturis explicandis versatur. Viderat ille ex hac ipsâ Aca-
Newtonum, divino planè ingenio hominem, cuncta quæ supra sunt, quæque adspectabilem Mundi fabricam constituunt, sicuti provinciam suam propriam occupâsse, & accuratè admodum explicuisse; Deumque inde Mundi ipsius conditorem, Rectoremque demonstrâsse. Noster igitur, ingenio haud dispari, eodemque naturæ investigandæ studio incensus, at contrariâ viâ insistere & spb terras penetrare cgebatur: Nec minora tamen inde rerum
mira-

miracula eruit; Diluvium Universale; Sacrarum literarum fidem; Deum.

Sic jam duplex quoddam contra Atheos confictus tandem argumentum; quod, Quercus ejus Virgiliana ad instar, quantum auras ad æthereas, atque in altum caput attollit, tantum deorsum pariter, atque ipsa in Tartara radicibus tendit.

Sic veterem istam Orphei fabellam Woodwardum quodammodo egisse vidimus; quamque uxoris usque loco adamaverat, Scientiam quasi ex inferis evocasse.

Dumque Newtonus ex Solis naturâ perspectâ, lucis simul naturam explicuit; hic noster ex caligine ipsâ, mediisque è tenebris elicuit lucem.

Alii rerum naturalium investigatores Fossilia ista non nisi ad corporis curationem ususque medicos conquirenda & adhibenda existimârunt: Woodwardus autem altiora longè sapiens, eaque tanquam nobilioris studii instrumenta considerans, ad animi medicinam cultumque princeps adhibuit. Hâc semel cogitatione impulsus nullam sibi requiem dare potuit, donec omnia, quæ e Terræ visceribus rariora ubivis gentium effodiantur, infinito sumptu & labore conquississet & in capsulas suas condidisset. In illâ Arcâ, quicquid India ferè utraque pretiosi habeat, non ad luxum, vitæque delicias, sed ad animi pastum, ad scientiam repositum; in illâ, auri argentique pondus, non ad quæstum avaritiamque, sed ad Philosophiam, ad Naturæ contemplationem reconditum videatis. Hanc enim rerum rarissimarum collectionem, non ostentationis aut gloriolæ, sed argumenti gravis magnique illustrandi causâ comparaverat; quò Mosaicæ scilicet Historiæ fidem, Diluvii universalis veritatem, resque in eo omnes fusas quasi communiter inter se & liquefactas ostenderet: In quâ quidem

dem disputatione, hæc ille omnis generis Fossilia, quasi totidem argumenta & testimonia, exposuit. Quicquid enim in illa Universalis Naturæ perturbatione accidisse credibile est, illud omne ex rebus ipsis ab eo collectis perspicere jam atque oculis præcognoscere licet. Hic res naturâ & genere diversas, animatas cum inanimis, marinas cum terrestribus, & in unum corpus conflatas cernimus: quibusque Naturæ non nisi unum Oceani fundum, uti nativam sedem, assignasset; eas hinc tum ex summis montium jugis, tum ex imis sœpius radicibus effusas contemplamur: Hic tenera plantarum pisciumque corpora in lapidibus jam indurescentibus inhærentia atque inclusa, formam sui & effigiem vel durissimis faxis impressisse admiramur: Quod fieri quidem omnino potuisse, nisi ex Diluvii omnia dissolventis permiscensque vi, incredibile sanè videtur.

Hanc autem viri docti sententiam libri ejus ingeniosè admodum & eruditè conscripti confirmant: de quibus, cum dissertationibus ex hoc ipso loco habendis materiem sint aliquando præbituri, nihil jam amplius dicam, quàm quod omnium plausu excepti, omniumque pæne in linguas conversi, *Woodwardi* nomen per orbem literatum clarum & nobile reddiderunt.

Mihi enim credite, Academici, cùm in exteris gentibus versarer, plura de hoc uno homine a me fuisse quæsitâ, quàm, *Newtono* excepto, de reliquis fere omnibus Angliæ nostræ literatis: tanta tum scriptorum ejus, tum rerum, quas ex omnibus planè locis coëmerat, fama per cunctas nationes pervaserat.

Pudet ferè dicere, hunc talem tantumque virum ad illud doctrinæ & virtutis fastigium propriis viribus & ingenio, absque hac nostrâ disciplinâ pervenire potuisse: & ejusmodi

homines, si vel numero plures vel temporibus sæpius existerent, vereretur profectò, ut Academiæ nostræ inutiles merito censerentur. Sed rari admodum tam excellenti naturâ, & in singulis ætatibus vix singuli reperiuntur, atque is ipse de quo dicimus, egregiâ suâ in hanc Academiam liberalitatem, quanto eam Reipublicæ ornamento esse censuerit, moriens declaravit: Declaravit, inquam, illud sibi unum ad perfectam laudem defuisse; quod ad naturale illud ingenii bonum non institutio etiam Academica accessisset.

Multos cognovimus, viros quidem bonos & eruditos, qui ita sese literarum studiis abdiderunt, ut nihil inde ad communem hominum fructum offerre potuerint: At *Woodwardus* noster, cum vitam civibus suis quàm maximè fructuosam atque utilem degisset, eandem quoque curam vel moriens non dimisit; sed quò patriæ plurimum etiam in morte prodesset, studiosè prospexit. Hoc consilio armaria ista præclara, a curiosis tantopere celebrata, omnique Fossilium genere referta, immensam quandam studiorum & scientiæ suppellectilem, nobis testamento legavit: quodque in vita carissimum habuerat, illud nobis conservandum, nostræ fidei ac tutelæ mandandum curavit: Thesaurum, vel Regum gazis anteferendum; quippe qui nec auro redimi, nec pretio comparari, nec nisi summo studio & industriâ hominis tum eruditi, tum divitis, atque in illo uno & operam & pecuniam etiam omnem collocantis conquiri & colligi poterat. Et quò ad publicos demum usus, quibus ille unicè studuerat, promptior paratiorque hic rerum thesaurus esset; Custodem ei atque Interpretem, qui Fossilium præcipuè scientiam Juventuti Academicæ explicaret, stipendio amplo & liberali instructum constituit.

PHYSIOLOGIÆ EXPLICANDÆ MUNERE, &c.

Hoc quàm præclarum Academiæ nostræ ornamentum, quod in ~~nulla~~ aliâ Academiâ reperitur? Quàm præclarum pariter de discipulâ nostrâ ac virtute testimonium, quod *Woodwardi* iudicio gravissimo confirmatur? Nos enim ille optimos scientiarum custodes; Religionis propugnatores; Mosis defensores, suâ certè sententiâ declaravit, qui nostras potissimum in manus defensionis ejus instrumenta tradenda esse voluit. Nec honorificè minus de nobis etiam exteri existimabunt, cum *Woodwardum* audierint, nos rerum sibi carissimarum conservatores, famæ & nominis tutores, bonorum hæredes delegisse.

Nostrium modò erit, Academici, hominis tantopere de nobis meriti iudicio fervire, voluntati obtemperare, hominumque expectationi satisfacere. Ut *Woodwardo* enim gloriosum fuit, tantam nobis eruditionis materiem comparâsse ac reliquisse; sic nobis sanè turpissimum erit, quod ab alterius virtute accepimus, illud nostrâ ornare ac tueri non posse. Sed meliora de vobis augurari licet; ex hoc enim tam celebri ordinum omnium concursu studium planè vestrum ardoremque agnosco; agnosco, inquam, verum illud Atheniensium veterum ingenium, novi semper aliquid cognoscendi audiendique avidum.

Animos hominum, cum e corporibus exceßerint, remanere tamen & æternos esse, magnum ex illo argumentum petiere veteres, quod optimum quemque, immortalitatis amore flagrantem, futura semper prospicere, & posteritati maximè fervire vidissent: Naturâ quasi ex optimis istis ingeniis significante, esse aliquid, quod ad nos etiam post mortem pertineat. Et Tu quoque, Præstantissime *Woodwardè*, novum quoddam huic argumento, nec leve illud quidem, tuæ auctoritatis pondus adjecisti; quem eâdem viâ, ac veteres illos Heroas, posteritati

serviendo, hominesque juvando ad cælum atque immortalitatem contendisse vidimus. Et dum beatorum in sedibus debita virtuti tuæ præmia percipis; si quis in mortuis resideat rerum humanarum sensus, ad gaudia ista, quibus jam præsueris, hoc certè, quasi cumulus quidam, accedet, quòd quæ in publica patriæ commoda tantâ cum sapientia excogitâras, effectum jam suum obtinere, atque ad exitum perducere sentias: Quod hanc optimorum juvenum frequentiam, hunc doctissimorum hominum cœtum, Tui nominis auctoritate, Tuique imitatione excitatum, ad virtutem artesque bonas propagandas tanto studio convenisse videas.

Quæ verò, Academici, de *Woodwardo* dixi, si quis me gloriose nimis & adulatorie dixisse arbitretur, propterea quod in virtutibus ejus celebrandis de vitiis prorsus tacuerim; is de mortuo me loqui meminerit. Vitia eum habuisse fatendum est; quibus neminem unquam mortalium caruisse cognovimus; illa verò cum in vitâ virtutum splendore obruerentur, post mortem sanè obliterari penitus debent. Nam si de mortuis, uti aiunt, nil nisi bonum; de eo certè nihil aliud prædicandum, a cujus vel mortui liberalitate hæc tanta beneficia accepimus; de eo, inquam, qui non benignitati suæ eosdem ac vitæ terminos esse voluit; neque mortem ipsam benefaciendi sibi potestatem præripere passus est.

Sed de mortuo hætenus: Ad vivos jam sese conferat Oratio.

Frustra enim tali erga nos animo; frustra tantâ in hac Academiam benevolentia fuisset *Woodwardus*; ni alios etiam sui similes, eodem animo, eadem benevolentia post se reliquisset, Testamenti hæredes, voluntatis exequendæ curatores. Frustra, inquam, hæc tam liberaliter tum in nos tum in patriam ipsam consilia suscepisset, ni alios viros delegisset, qui

se mortuo consiliis suis vim effectumque darent, nec spes quidem, cum, opinioque de hominibus concepta fefellit. Illi enim, quod traditum sibi commissumque habuerant, magno licet cum labore & molestiâ conjunctum, summâ in mortui pietate, summâ in nos benignitate, summâ fide ac diligentia absolverunt, & ad finem tandem destinatum perduxerunt. Hos igitur viros, officii licet conscientiâ contentos, nec laudem ullam plausumve captantes, at nostrâ, at virtutis ipsius causâ cum honore nominare, debitisque laudibus celebrare debemus.

Imprimis igitur honoris gratiâ commemorandus vir Præ-nobilis & Honoratus *Dixieus Windjor*; non tam nobilitate, quâ tamen maximâ floret, quàm virtute propriâ conspicuus: quem in hac Musarum sede multos annos ita versantem vidimus, ut Nobilibus, modestiæ, humanitatis, facilitatis, & vel Infimis, diligentia, officii, legumque nostrarum observantiæ exemplum semper proponeretur. Ad publicum autem Britannia Concilium missus ab hoc municipio, per annos plusquam viginti Legatus, tum in Academia, tum in universi populi negotiis commodisque tuendis eam fidem, gravitatem, constantiam adhibuit, ut non apud nos solum, sed per Angliam totam fama ejus clara & illustris pervagaret. *Woodwardo* igitur de Cantabrigia nostra ac Patria simul ornanda cogitanti, Hunc certè hominem si non privata amicitia, at publica civium vox auctoritasque socium adiutoremque dedissent.

Præfuit simul huic negotio vir illustris & liberalis *Hugo Bethel*; qui in exteras terras proficiscendo, variosque hominum mores contemplando, ea prudentiæ & humanitatis fundamenta jecit; ea generosæ indolis ornamenta domum reduxit; ut Civem sese egregium, Patriæ amantem, communis liberatis vindicem in Senatu etiam Britannico cum magna sua laude præ-

O R A T I O *de novo*

præstiterit. Hunc igitur virum tantis & animi, & fortunæ bonis instructum; fide præstantem; literis politioribus ornatum; in Academia augenda, Artiumque studiis promovendis, meritò sibi *Woodwardus* Consiliarium esse voluit.

Eodem etiam nomine celebrandus, vir ~~studem~~ ingenuus, ingenuisque artibus præditus, *Richardus Graham*; qui huius olim Academiæ alumnus, nihil sibi unquam antiquius, nihil magis in votis habuit, quàm quò in Almam Matrem filium sese pium gratumque ostenderet; itaque non in mortui solum voluntate exequenda fidum eum ac diligentem, sed viventi etiam *Woodwardo* auctorem hortatoremque assiduum cognovi, ut eam omnino voluntatem fusciperet; utque eximiam illam rerum suarum collectionem in hac potissimum Academia, tanquam in loco maximè conspicuo dignoque, collocaret.

Postremò non minori tamen cum laude nominandus *Richardus King*; qui miles licèt, & in armis enutritus, in quibus Tribunatus honorem peradolescens meruerat, ita tamen Musis, studiisque humanioribus deditus est, ut miseram luminum orbitatem, quam in expeditione olim pro patria suscepta passus erat, his jam unicè sustentet. In hoc autem munere instituendo, hæc ei propria quædam, & præcipua laus debetur, quòd cum suo ipsius damno virum sese bonum atque Academiæ nostræ amantem ostenderit; quòd officium lucro, pietatem quæstui anteposuerit: cùm enim a *Woodwardo*, cui omnium amicitia conjunctissimus vixerat, bonorum, siquid residui esset fructuumque intermediarum hæres is solus institueretur; at quanto magis ex rei conficiendæ mora fructus sibi accrescerent, tanto ille diligentius rem ipsam conficiendam, & ad exitum perducendam curavit: &, quasi cavendum sibi statuisset, ne quidquam omnino præter amicitiae carissimæ memoriam ex Hæreditate ista ad se perveniret, sepulchrum

Amico

Amico mortuo marmoreum splendidumque proprio consilio propriisque sumptibus extrui, ac in Templo Westmonasteriensis collocari jussit.

Hoc igitur *Woodwardi* nostri prudentiæ & judicii perpetuum certè specimen extabit; quod tales sibi viros ad consilia sua exequenda delegerit, quos vel mortuo fidem persoluturos cognovit: hoc perpetuum pariter illorum virtutis, & integritatis testimonium; quod tam religiosè opinioni ejus responderint, fidem absolverint. Illi igitur post *Woodwardum*, ad sempiternam rei memoriam in Annalibus nostris inscribantur, Academiae hujus Fautores, Amici, Patroni.

Me verò quod attinet, Academici, ipse nonnullis Fortunæ procellis jactatus, in hoc Academiae otio, tanquam in portu, tutum semper atque honestum simul perfugium inveni: Vos enim, cum certorum hominum invidia indignè olim vexarer, novum in hac Academia Protobibliothecarii munus eodem decreto instituis, & ad me detulistis: publico illo judicii vestri testimonio significantes, & quid de me judicaretis & quid aliis etiam judicandum præscriberetis. Jam verò vestra auctoritas quàm latè pateat videtis: quippe dignissimi illi *Woodwardi* Hæredes, vestro exemplo commoti, vestrumque factum imitati, novum hocce Physicæ explicandæ munus haud citius ex *Woodwardi* testamento constituendum, quàm ad me ultrò deferendum curârunt.

Utinam modò Munus ipsum vel personæ studiisque meis accommodatius, vel ipse tali ingenio essem ut ad quælibet facillè studia meipsum accommodare & convertere possem: quicquid autem in me ingenii fuerit, illud omne in hac, quam nactus sum, provincia ordanda & tuenda me collocaturum polliceor: quam quidem si aut viribus majorem aut vitæ rationi molestam deum reperiam, deponere statim atque alteri tradere statui: in

hoc

O R A T I O *de novo* &c.

hoc interea uno felix, mihiq̃ue gratulans, quòd hãc occasione oblata, tum Celeberrimo *Woodwardo*; tum clarissimis viris Hæredibus ejus, pro summis eorum erga nos meritis, proque ea, quæ mihi præcipuè cum singulis intercessit, amicitia; tum Almæ denique Matri, cujus amplitudinẽ, splendorem, dignitatem omnibus meis commodis antepono, hoc animi pii gratique officium, hoc, quantulumcunque est, laudis verè meritæ præconium, mihi publicè præstare ac persolvere contigit.

F I N I S.



